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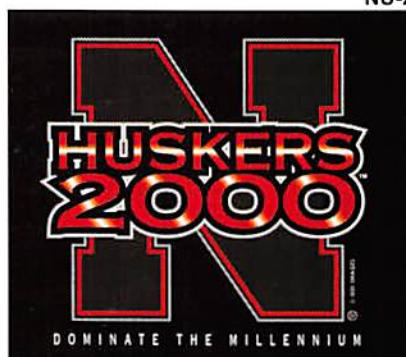


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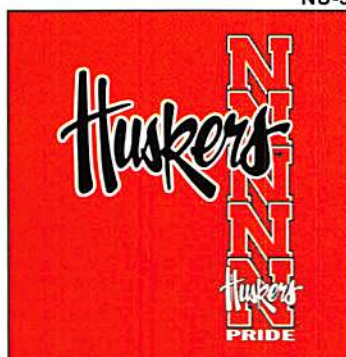
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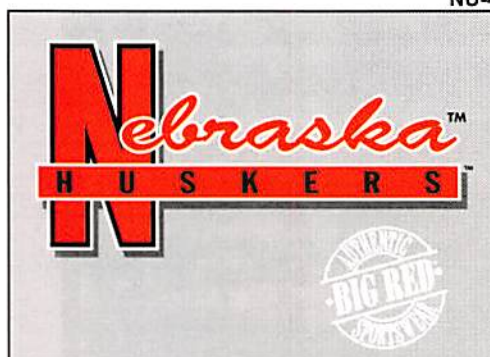
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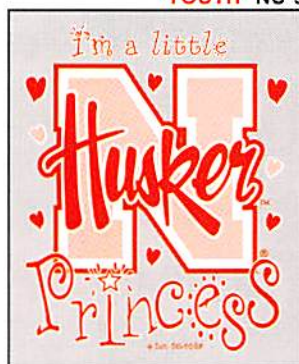
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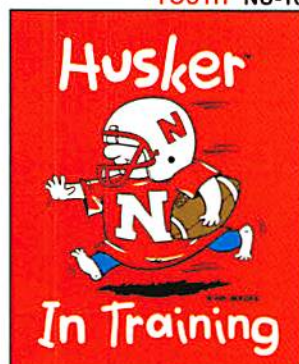
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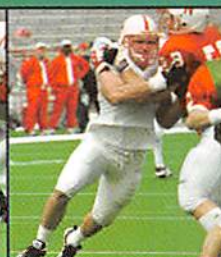
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We'll be taking the next couple of months off as *Huskers Illustrated* gears up for the 1999 football season. Look for the August issue (Vol. 19, No. 7) to arrive in mailboxes around Sept. 1.

ON THE COVER

Mike, Ralph Brown artwork by Scott Bruhn

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Still Growing

Since its dedication in 1923, a lot has changed in and around Memorial Stadium



Brian Hill

IN 1923, the first issue of Time, the first weekly news magazine was published on March 3. On March 26, BBC Radio broadcast the first daily weather forecast. On May 2-3, the first transcontinental airplane flight was made in 26 hours and 50 minutes from New York to San Diego.

Although it obviously didn't receive the attention of another stadium that opened that year (Yankee Stadium), Memorial Stadium was dedicated on Oct. 20, 1923, at the Homecoming game in which Nebraska was held to a scoreless tie by Kansas.

In the fall of 1922, a drive for \$430,000 was undertaken by faculty, students, alumni and friends of the University of Nebraska. In addition to the amazingly low price, compared to modern stadiums, Memorial Stadium was completed incredibly in a few more than 90 working days, according to the Nebraska Football Media Guide.

The venerable stadium has undergone numerous changes in the last 76 years, capped by the current \$36 million improvement project, which will include 42 skyboxes, a club seating area, stadium view lounge, new press box and renovated concourses. The project will be completed before the 1999 season.

Most of us have been around for at least some of the changes, but one Huskers Illustrated reader has a unique perspective of Memorial Stadium.

R.L. Buttery of Burke, Va., was born in Lincoln in 1917 at 504 N. 15th St. His grandparents lived just a few blocks away at 1204 U St.

The location where Buttery's grand-

parents lived is now part of the grassy boulevard-type area between the NU Coliseum and Morrill Hall.

Buttery, who graduated from Nebraska in 1940, went into the Army and was at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. He was gracious enough to share several photographs of Memorial Stadium as it originally looked (see Pages 10-11). One, taken from his grandparents' yard, shows the crowd arriving for that first Homecoming game. The automobiles on 12th Street help put the era in perspective.

Buttery has followed the Cornhuskers and visited Memorial Stadium over the years. He last attended a game "against Colorado about two years ago in the cold rain."

Those with the wherewithal to afford one of the new skyboxes won't have to worry about the elements this fall.

The impressive structure has changed the skyline of Lincoln. After a rare 9-4 season in 1998, the football

team that performs on the field below obviously hopes the sky is the limit as well.

The 1999 edition of the Nebraska football team is covered extensively in this annual yearbook. We also take a look at the other Big 12 schools and give you a glimpse of the national scene.

A lot of work from a lot of people went into this special edition.

Enjoy it. ■



Got Something To Say?

Please send your comments and questions to: Letters, 3210 NW 3rd St., Lincoln, Neb. 68521. You can also fax them to us at (402) 474-5132. We reserve the right to edit the letters for clarity, content and length. For those with electronic mail abilities, Hleditor@aol.com.

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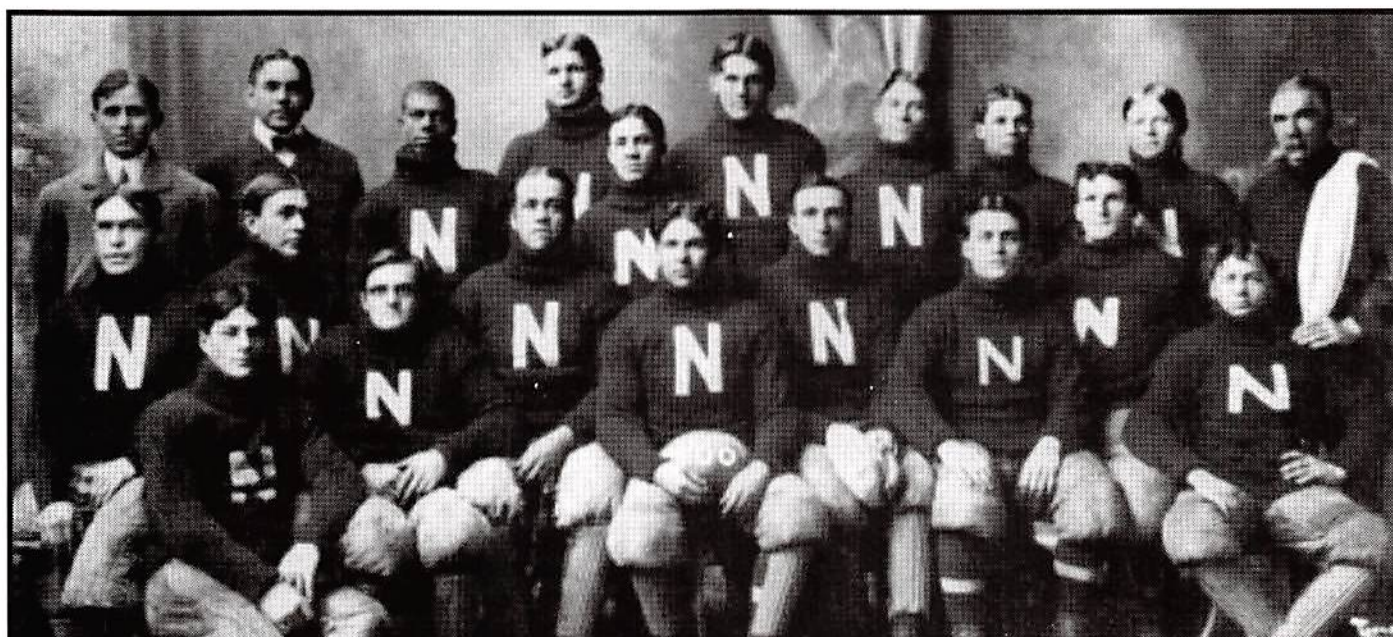
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Who Will It Be Under Center Sept. 4?

Solich anticipates controversy in regard to starting quarterback



Mike Babcock

ERIC CROUCH OR BOBBY NEWCOMBE?

There's a question to spark some off-season debate among Nebraska football fans. And with Newcombe's absence from spring practice because of December knee surgery, such a debate would be even more speculative than if the two had been able to compete in March and April.

Newcombe hasn't played since late October, when he started the Missouri game then gave way to Monte Christo.

Crouch replaced Christo in the next game against Texas and finished out the season. But he was limited to some degree during the spring by having to wear a green pullover jersey.

The green pullover helped keep him healthy, which was the intent. But the tradeoff was, it restricted him at times, and as a result, his performance didn't always reflect his ability.

It won't be two-hand touch when the Cornhuskers open at Iowa on Sept. 4. And by then, Coach Frank Solich probably will have settled on one or the other as his No. 1 quarterback.

He will have unless his philosophy has changed after one season as head coach. During a post-spring news conference a year ago to announce that Newcombe had earned the starting job in competition with Crouch and Frankie London, Solich said he didn't think alternating quarterbacks would work.

He reiterated that before the start of two-a-day practices in the fall. "Things could change, not only at that position but at every position on our team," he said. "But in order for a guy to lose a starting position once he's earned it during spring ball, it would have to be a real dropoff of play."

"So Bobby will start. Eric will back him up . . . going into fall camp."

Solich was able to avoid a dreaded "quarterback controversy" going into last season. But he won't be able to this time around, which is why he addressed the issue prior to spring practice.

As Tom Osborne did before him, Solich anticipates potential problems and tries to deal with them. So after answering questions about spring practice for a handful of reporters at Cook Pavilion during a break in post-winter conditioning tests, he brought up the subject of quarterbacks, unsolicited.

As television reporters turned off their cameras and began gathering their equipment and writers closed their notebooks, Solich offered a postscript to the proceedings.

"I just might let you know how we really look at things in terms of players coming back off of injury," he said. "Typically, the policy has been, when a guy does come back off injury, he regains his status on the football team at where he left off. And, you know that will still be the case."

"That will affect a lot of players, of course."

Offensive left tackle Adam Julch and weakside lineback-

ers Eric Johnson and Julius Jackson remained atop the depth chart at their positions despite missing spring practice with injuries.

Among others who missed spring practice were I-backs DeAngelo Evans and Dan Alexander, though Evans returned for non-contact work near the end. Despite being sidelined, they shared first team on the depth chart with Correll Buckhalter going into the spring, and that's how they'll go into the fall.

So there might be an "I-back controversy" as well as a "quarterback controversy."

For some reason, by the way, competition for the starting assignment at other positions is rarely, if ever, described as a controversy, a curious situation to which Osborne often alluded.

When was the last time an "offensive center controversy" or a "strongside linebacker controversy" arose? The answer, of course, is never. But a partial explanation for that is, players can alternate at most positions without jeopardizing the continuity of the offense or the defense.

Anyway, come fall, "there's probably going to be a lot of controversy in regard to the quarterback," said Solich. "There generally is. And certainly those two guys, Bobby and Eric, have proven to be outstanding athletes, with outstanding ability. So that's the nature of how the position is going to play out."

There also could be some debate about who should be the No. 1 I-back, he said. "We just don't want there to be any controversy within our football team, amongst our coaches and players."

"We understand there will be a controversy out there with the fans, the media. But we're just going to move forward, knowing how our policy is. We'll see what happens in the spring. We'll see what happens in early fall camp. And we'll go from there when it comes to, really, those two positions."

"You'll get that same answer for a long time on those two positions. There's going to be a lot of water that runs under the bridge before we open up with the University of Iowa. So we're not going to get into a major discussion on those two positions, as to where those injured players fit in."

By anticipating and clarifying his policy, with which most reporters were familiar anyway, Solich avoided having to answer such questions very often, if at all, during spring practice.

Afterward, Solich was asked if he were ready to announce his starters for the Iowa game.

The question was tongue-in-cheek. It elicited a smile from Solich. But not an answer. ■



Who'll start: Eric Crouch (left) or Bobby Newcombe?

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for more than 20 years. Mike can be reached at mdb@inetnebr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.

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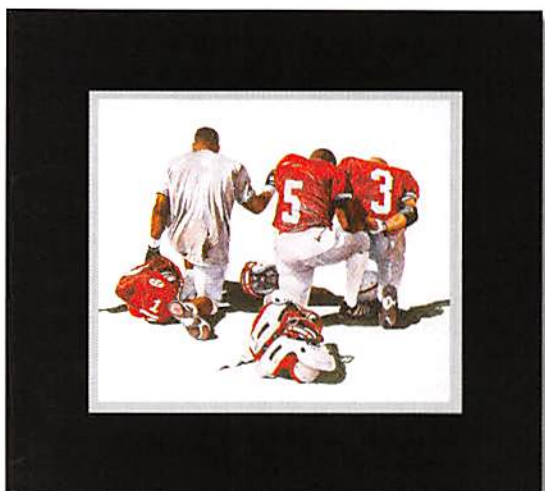
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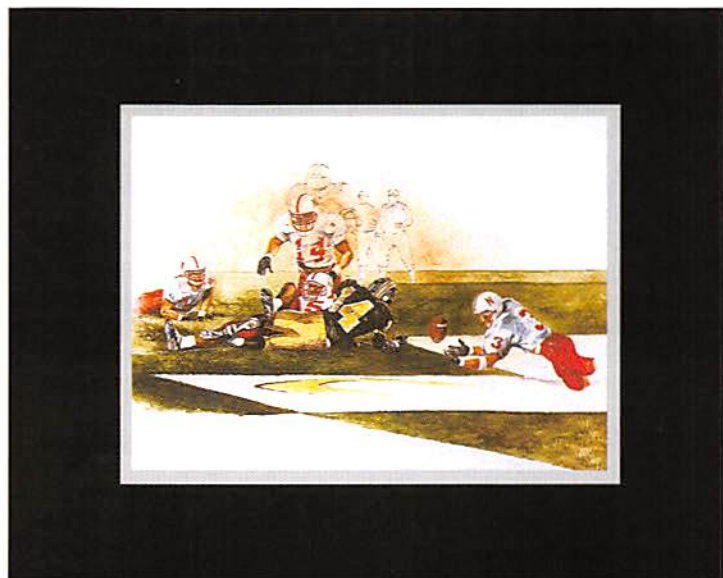
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Will The 1999 Book Be A Best Seller?

It should be a season of some things old, some things new



Bill DOLEMAN

IF THE 1998 SEASON of Nebraska football had been a book rather than a live-action drama, it would have been a most compelling read.

Over the next few months, a whole new book of Husker history will be written. How it will end is already being debated in the coffee shops and country clubs from the big cities to the Sandhills.

How will it unfold? Well, while I've never confused being a sports announcer with being a sports journalist, here's an armchair editor's look at the storylines for the next 11 chapters of Nebraska that will be chronicled in the coming months.

■ **Sept. 4 at Iowa** — Plan on being inundated with stories about how this is a border battle that should be played every year, which it should. And get used to hearing about how Kirk Ferentz taking over for Hayden Fry compares to Frank Solich taking over for Tom Osborne, which it doesn't. Fry was a good coach, but being around for a long time and being the best of all time are two different things.

■ **Sept. 11 vs. California** — Nebraska's first home game. My guess is that the sun will disappear behind the new Memorial Stadium skyboxes shortly after noon. That place is huge. In reference to the massive structure, reporters will ask the question, "So what do you think of it?" over and over. Sidebar story: Huskers win.

■ **Sept. 18 vs. Southern Mississippi** — Ever hear of Brett Favre? He's a former Golden Eagle. If you haven't heard much else about Southern Miss, ask the folks at Alabama, Auburn, LSU and Georgia. In the '90s, they all got run over in what they thought would be a walk in the park, and Florida fell victim in 1989. This is one of those good directional schools you'll learn about.

■ **Sept. 25 at Missouri** — OK, who remembers what happened the last time Nebraska played in Columbia? Let's just say you'll get a "kick" out of seeing all the replays in the days leading up to the game. Everyone involved in "The Catch" will be interviewed. Matt Davison and Shevin Wiggins will be booed during it. Norm Stewart and Quin Snyder join in solidarity to rally the Tiger troops.

■ **Oct. 2 vs. Oklahoma State** — Everybody loves Cowboy Coach Bob Simmons and quarterback Tony Lindsay, a pair of Colorado castoffs who have resurrected the OSU program. After last year's down-to-the-wire finish in Kansas City (a 24-17 NU win from which the Pokes never recovered), the talk will center around how far the Cowboys have come since 1995, when Nebraska won 64-21.

■ **Oct. 9 vs. Iowa State** — Yawn. This game will yield the same old stories about how Dan McCarney is still

laying the foundation for the future of Cyclone football and how Nebraska isn't looking ahead because the Huskers are reminded of Ames 1992. I really can't think of anything else to say about this one, and I doubt anyone else can either.

■ **Oct. 23 at Texas** — While all parties involved will be respectful and say they haven't looked ahead, this is the rivalry the football gods wanted when the Big 12 was created. Will Nebraska avenge its home loss to the Longhorns on Halloween '98? Will Texas fans still think that Mack Brown walks on water if they lose to NU? This is what we like to call a "Big Game." Players say, "this is what it's all about." And they'll do so again in three of the next four weeks.

■ **Oct. 30 at Kansas** — A. Can Nebraska avoid a let-down? or B. Can Nebraska regroup? This game really has nothing to do with the Jayhawks, who have not scored on NU in two years. This game will have everything to do with what took place a week earlier in Austin.

■ **Nov. 6 vs. Texas A&M** — The Huskers begin their toughest stretch of the season by playing host to last year's conference champion. R.C. Slocum will talk about how much he respects Nebraska's program, and everyone will marvel about how versatile and fast 270-pound fullback Ja'Mar Toombs really is. This is the battle of defensive nicknames: The Blackshirts vs. The Wrecking Crew.

■ **Nov. 13 vs. Kansas State** — While the coaches and players will be tight-lipped, the fans won't be. Wildcat boosters will crow about K-State's tradition that dates back to the late 1990s. Husker fans will chuckle and count to five . . . as in national championships. The two sides will tell the

same bad jokes about each other. And, while I hope never to see that uncalled facemask-turned-felony again, I know I will, but it does give me the willies. Something tells me that crowd noise will be a factor.

■ **Nov. 26 at Colorado** — By now, you will be well-versed in the Bowl Championship Series scenario and how this game fits into the mix. Also, expect things to be cold, and I'm not just talking about the weather. Sounds like Gary Barnett spells "Nebraska" with Bill McCartney's red crayons, which means the renewal of the rivalry myth that has spawned a decade of debate despite the NU dominance.

Of course, the potential is there for another championship chapter or two to be added at a later date, but how it all ends remains to be seen. In this case, there's no peaking to the back of the book because history has yet to be made. It will all play out this fall, and that's when you can read about it. ■



Will another chapter be written in San Antonio Dec. 4?

Bill Doleman's face is familiar to Cornhusker fans. He is host for several Nebraska-related television programs including the "Husker Show" and coaches' shows for Terry Pettit, Paul Sanderford and Frank Solich.

After Further Review . . .

Wiggins hopes to provide more memorable plays after being granted another season of eligibility



Curt McKEEVER

BY NOW, Shevin Wiggins should have no problem accepting the unexplainable.

Two years ago, Wiggins started the famed Flea-kicker play at Missouri, rescuing a sure incompleteness as he fell backward to the ground by, purely on a knee-jerk reaction, popping the ball into the air with a leg to set up Matt Davison's miraculous catch.

Without the play, the Cornhuskers don't win in overtime. They don't win a national championship.

Wiggins probably entered his senior season in 1998 thinking, "Nothing that ever happens to me again in this uniform will ever top that."

I doubt he thinks that any more.

You see, as it turned out, the explosive wingback from Palmetto, Fla., still had some good fortune left.

In April, three days before Nebraska's Red-White spring game, Wiggins was your average former Husker pondering his future. He was a man without a team, who a month earlier had participated in workouts for NFL scouts on the Nebraska campus.

His plans changed with one late-night phone call to Nebraska Senior Associate Athletic Director Al Papik. On the line was an NCAA representative informing Papik that the NCAA Student-Athlete Reinstatement Committee had granted Nebraska's appeal for a sixth-year of eligibility for Wiggins.

In March, the committee had denied the same request.

"If I were a betting man, I would have thought we'd lose," said Papik, who had never seen NU get a favorable ruling in 13 years on the job. "They denied it originally based on the fact his participation was not limited by anything beyond his or the institution's control."

In the rare cases where the NCAA has given a player an additional year past the standard five-year clock, almost always it's because they've had a serious injury that has required more than one season to heal.

Wiggins' case had nothing to do with an injury.

Recruited in 1994 from Manatee High School in Palmetto, he sat out as a non-academic qualifier in 1994. Essentially, he was giving up a year of eligibility.

So after redshirting in 1995, Wiggins played for three seasons and then faced the prospects of life after collegiate football.

However, with a diagnosed learning disability on his side, he appealed to the NCAA for another year based on a U.S. Justice Department ruling. That ruling stated athletes who lost a year of eligibility because they did not qualify academically and were found to be learning-disabled could gain the year back if they completed 75 percent of the

requirements toward a degree in four years.

Since he was in his fifth year of school, Williams would have to earn his degree by August if he wanted to qualify for an extra year. And even then, the NCAA could have turned down his request — which is exactly what originally happened.

Now for the weird part.

Nebraska's appeal of that ruling was based on the same evidence submitted in the first request. The only difference was that faculty representative Dr. Josephine Potuto, a constitutional lawyer, wrote on Wiggins' behalf.

Perhaps Potuto should be voted as an honorary captain for the 1999 Cornhuskers because according to NU receivers coach Ron Brown, Wiggins was the most underrated player in the country last season.

The 5-foot-11, 200-pounder was the Cornhuskers' second-leading receiver with 22 catches, 326 yards and one touchdown. He also averaged 16 yards on 11 punt returns and 22.4 yards on 10 kickoff returns to earn honorable mention All-Big 12 honors.

"He does so many things," Brown said. "He's a great blocker, good downfield receiver, provides quiet leadership, and in the double-wing he can run the option. Without him, we would have lost a couple (more) games last year."

Nebraska went through spring practice minus five of its top six receivers from last season. Senior-to-be Sean Applegate and junior-to-be John Gibson, who have a total of two catches between them, were vying for the No. 1 wingback spot after Frankie London's career suffered another setback because of further leg surgery.

Wiggins' case was perhaps the best news to come from spring drills.

"It came at a good time for me," said Wiggins, who got his undergraduate degree in family and consumer science during spring graduation ceremonies. "I don't know if I'm mentally prepared for the next level. I'm excited to get a chance to get back out there."

"Hopefully, I can bring some leadership to the team on offense, as well as bringing a little bit more enthusiasm and aggressiveness."

Brown got so excited hearing the news that he checked to see if Wiggins might put on the pads for the spring game.

Wiggins politely declined. Something about having not taken a hit since the Holiday Bowl didn't seem so appealing.

Brown can wait. He knows that come fall, Wiggins will be ready to provide more memorable plays.

If you're Shevin Wiggins, you'd cherish each one. ■

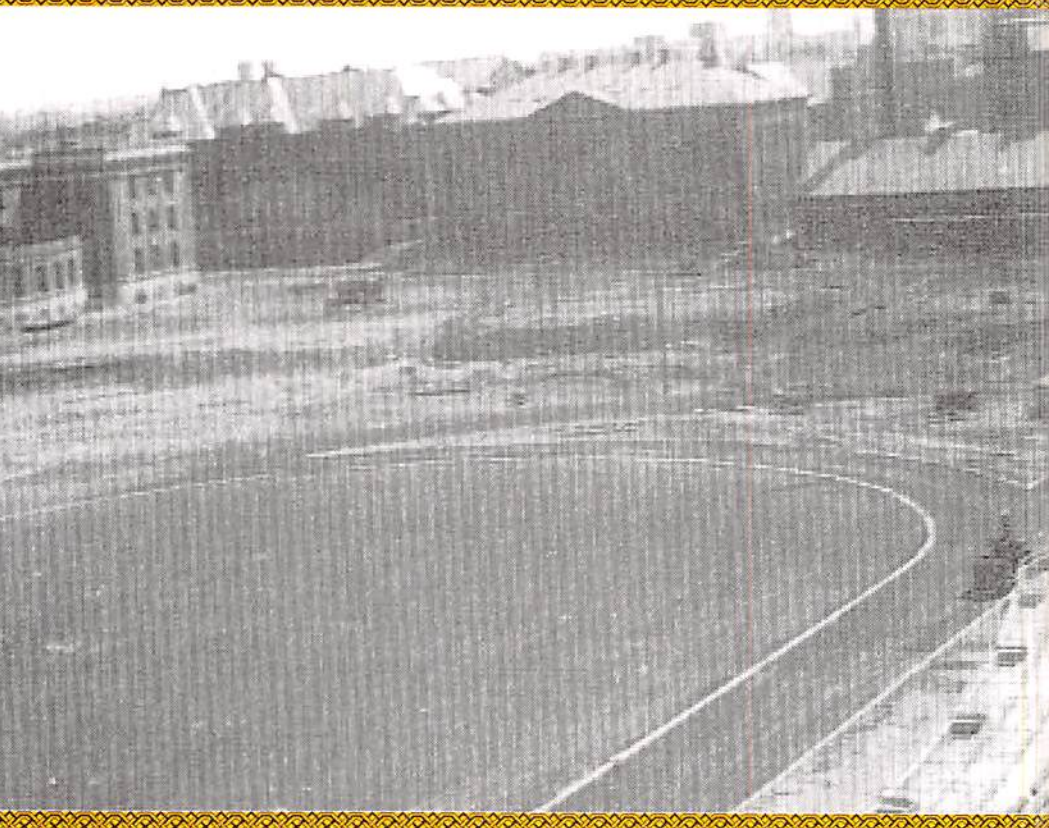
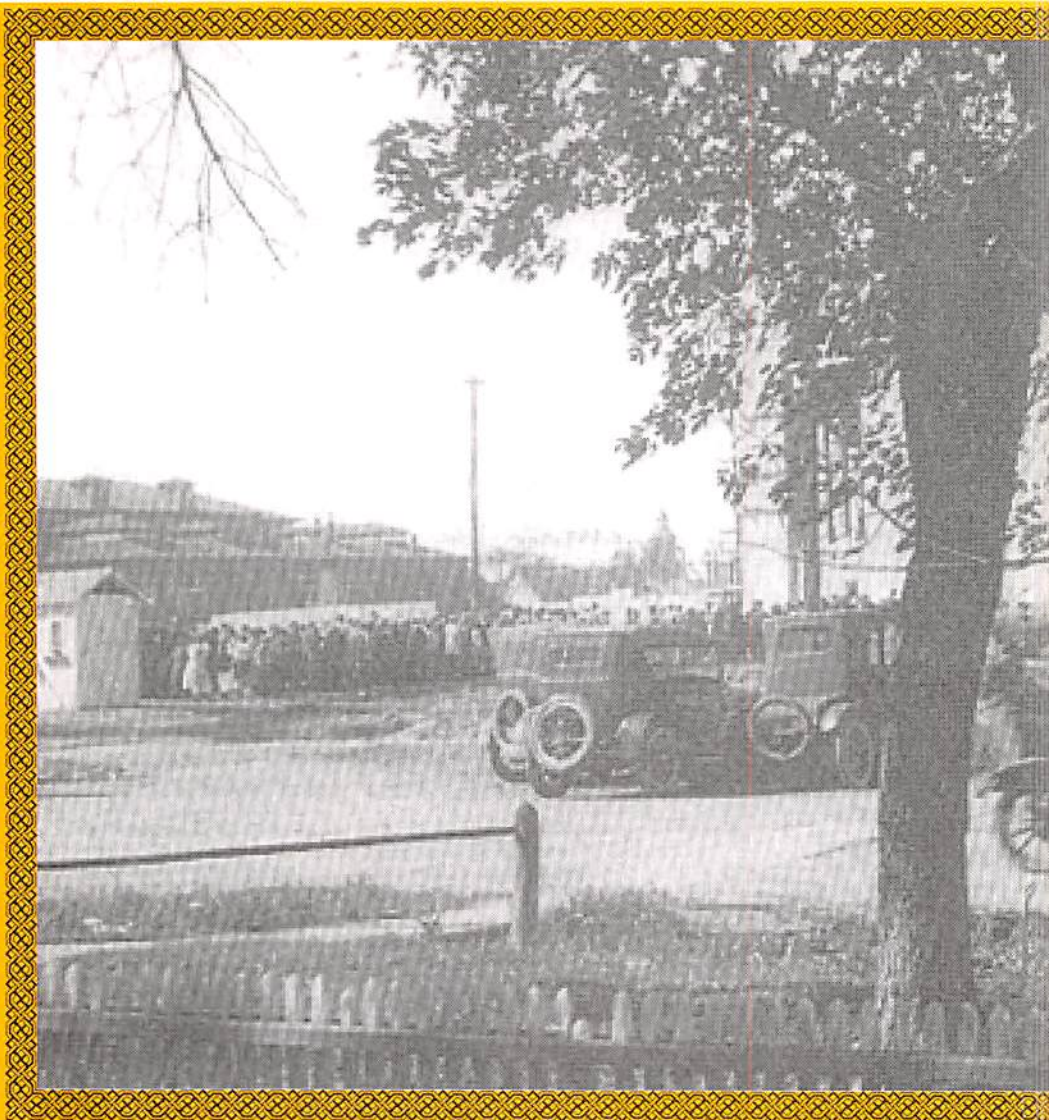


Shevin Wiggins has a new reason to smile.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

Memorial Stadium 1923

Memorial Stadium has undergone many changes from the early days pictured on this page. The crowd arrives for the first Homecoming game played at the stadium, a 0-0 tie with Kansas on Oct. 20, 1923, in the photo at right, taken from the front yard of 1204 U St. The view looking south from the new stadium (below left) shows the open end where the South Stadium was later added. The view from the top of the stadium (below right) shows the residential area to the east in the early 1920s. The photos were shared by R.L. Buttery, whose grandparents lived across the street from Memorial Stadium at 1204 U St.



Stadium Expansion

Here is the chronological order of Memorial Stadium expansion and improvement from the original 31,000-seat structure built in 1923:

1946 — Completion of Schulte Field House at north end of stadium (construction began in 1941, but was interrupted by World War II)

1964 — South end zone section installed, making the stadium a horseshoe, raising capacity to the 48,000 mark

1965 — Center portion of north end zone section added, raising capacity to more than 53,000 than 65,000 and making Memorial Stadium into a bowl

1967 — New press box, with guest section added, providing a beautiful and practical press facility

1970 — Installation of AstroTurf

1972 — South end zone extended, 9,400 seats added, raising capacity to 73,650

1973 — Athletic office building completed, housing dressing and training facilities for varsity football

1977 — Installation of new AstroTurf replacing the 1970 turf, and a new scoreboard over the north stadium

1980 — Completed top deck of press box for additional photo and visiting radio TV space

1981 — New west stadium weight room and new visitor's locker room in Schulte Field House

1982 — Expansion of Schulte Field House indoor practice area

1984 — New artificial All-Pro Turf playing surface installed

1985 — Completion of Hewitt Center (dining area/study hall) in West Stadium

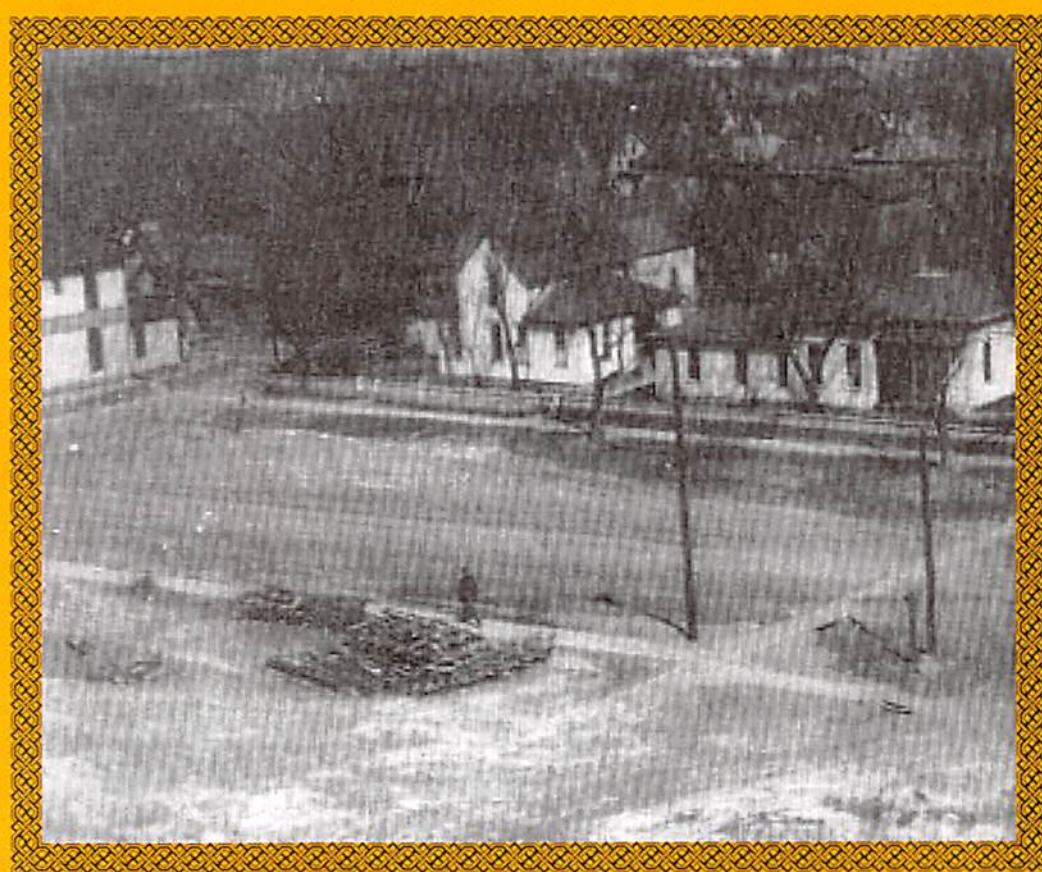
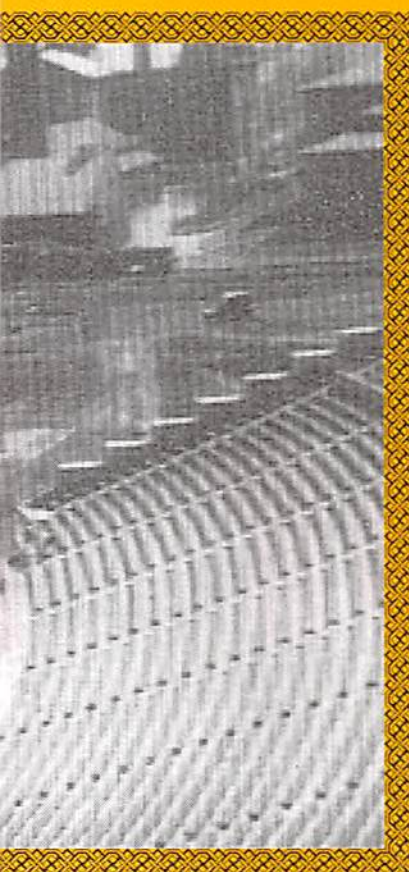
1989 — Expansion of strength complex and Hewitt Center

1992 — New AstroTurf-8 artificial turf installed

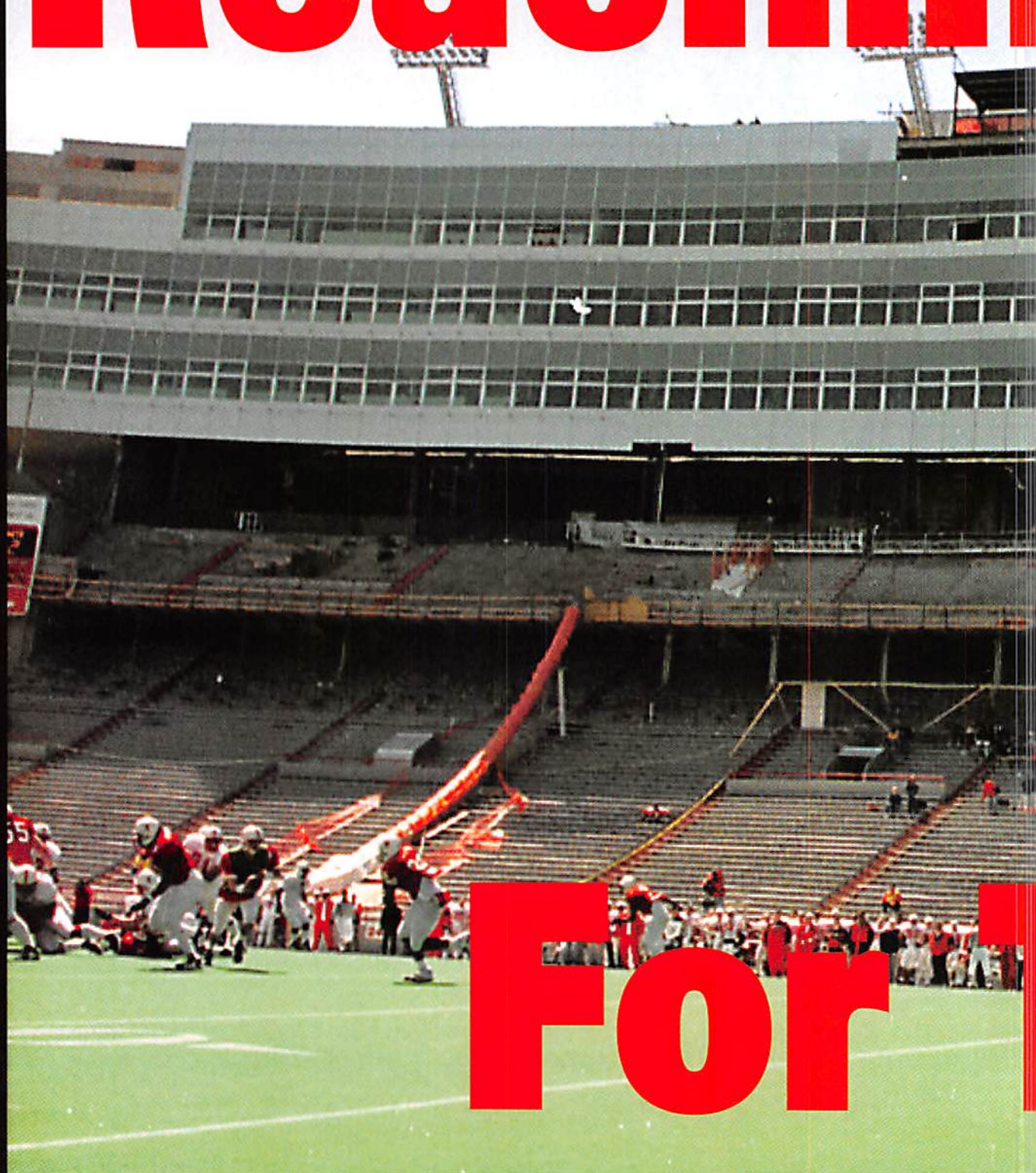
1994 — Installation of Mitsubishi Instant Replay boards and remodeling of Section 14 to accommodate disabled, reduced seating to 72,700

1995 — South Stadium training room remodeled and new interview room and player lounge completed during season

1997 — Memorial Stadium Improvement Project-Complete in Fall of 1999



Reaching



The massive new skybox structure tower



as the Huskers seek to improve on last year's 9-4 campaign.

over the west side of Memorial Stadium,

"There are things that I still think about, that I think I could have done maybe a little differently to help the season go a little smoother."

— Frank Solich

By Mike Babcock

The first season of the Frank Solich era is history. The pressure has diminished.

A more relaxed Nebraska football team will attempt to return to the Big 12 playoff after a year's absence and perhaps work its way back into the national championship chase.

Solich's second season should be a little easier. But that doesn't mean he has dismissed 1998. He couldn't do that even if he wanted. The four losses were the most in 30 years. And there was a dramatic decline in the Cornhuskers' rushing offense, long the foundation of their success.

"I don't know that I've totally put to bed last season," he said. "There are things that I still think about, that I think I could have done maybe a little differently to help the season go a little smoother."

Among the things over which he had no control were an inordinate number of injuries to key players and the attention focused on him and his program following Tom Osborne's retirement. That attention was further intensified by Nebraska's having just won a third national title in four seasons.

The Cornhuskers were the coaches' defending national champions, a fact that undoubtedly would have brought a flood of reporters to Lincoln even if Osborne had still been the coach.

As a result, Solich, his assistants and players were under constant scrutiny.

"Every time you turned around last year, there was someone, even a national person, as far as (requesting) interviews," Solich said, adding

that although he wouldn't have characterized the sometimes chaotic situation as a media circus, "I don't think it was too far from that."

"I felt sorry for the players because it drew so much attention, Tom stepping down and my taking over. To a degree, it had to have some effect on them because there were people around all the time."

"Certainly the pressure to do well and compete like Nebraska teams compete, I think, was put on that football team," he said. "And I think in a lot of ways, they handled it well."

"It maybe bothered me a little more than I thought."

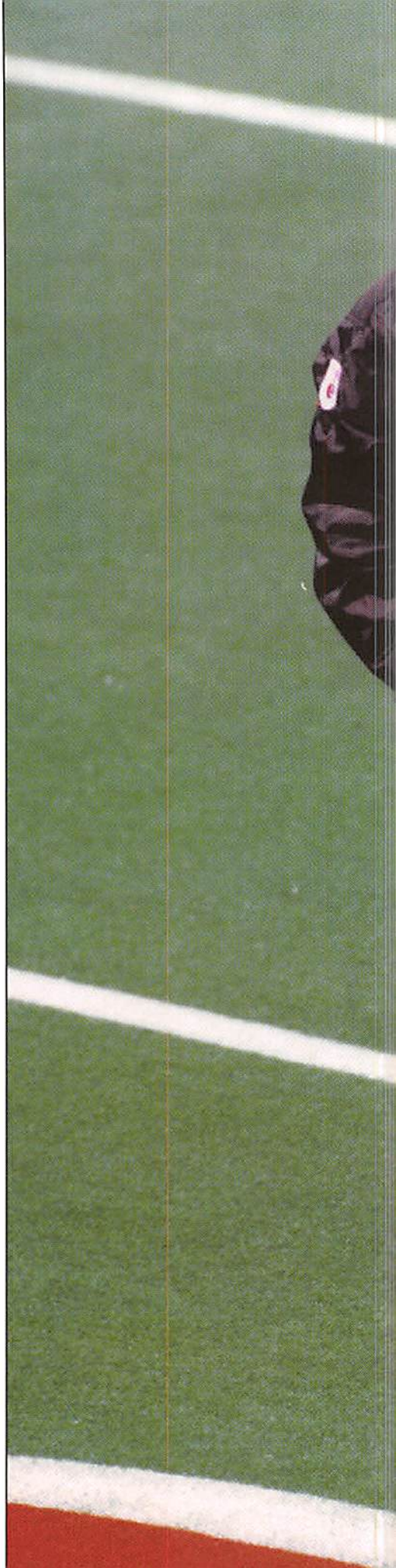
If that were true, he didn't show it. Even in the 23-20 Holiday Bowl loss to Arizona, "he maintained a pretty good composure throughout the whole thing," said quarterback Eric Crouch.

"He got a little emotional. But so did a lot of players, including myself, because that was tough, as hard as we prepared for that game, to go there, play a great team and come up three points short."

"He kept himself composed, did a good job of complimenting the players, telling everyone they played great. We made some mistakes. But we did have a chance to win in the last quarter."

In some ways the Holiday Bowl game was a microcosm of the season. Nebraska took a 20-16 lead, on a touchdown pass from Crouch to Tracey Wistrom and an extra-point kick by Kris Brown, with 10:55 remaining but couldn't hold it against the No. 5- and No. 6-ranked Wildcats.

Had Nebraska held on, it might





have finished with a Top 10 ranking, instead of 19th and 20th. "There's a very thin line between getting it all done and not getting it done," Solich said.

That could have served as a theme for the season. The Cornhuskers had a chance in the closing minutes to win every game they lost. Had the breaks gone their way, they could have been contenders.

The experience of having come so close should serve them well in their attempt to regain national prominence this season. "I look back and say to myself if we can just be strong through that fourth quarter and really be confident, I think we can win all our games this year," said Crouch.

"That's a big possibility. Every time I think about the four losses, I think about how close they were to wins, how we might have gone 13-0. And last year, we had a really young team.

"This year, we have a lot of guys out there with experience."

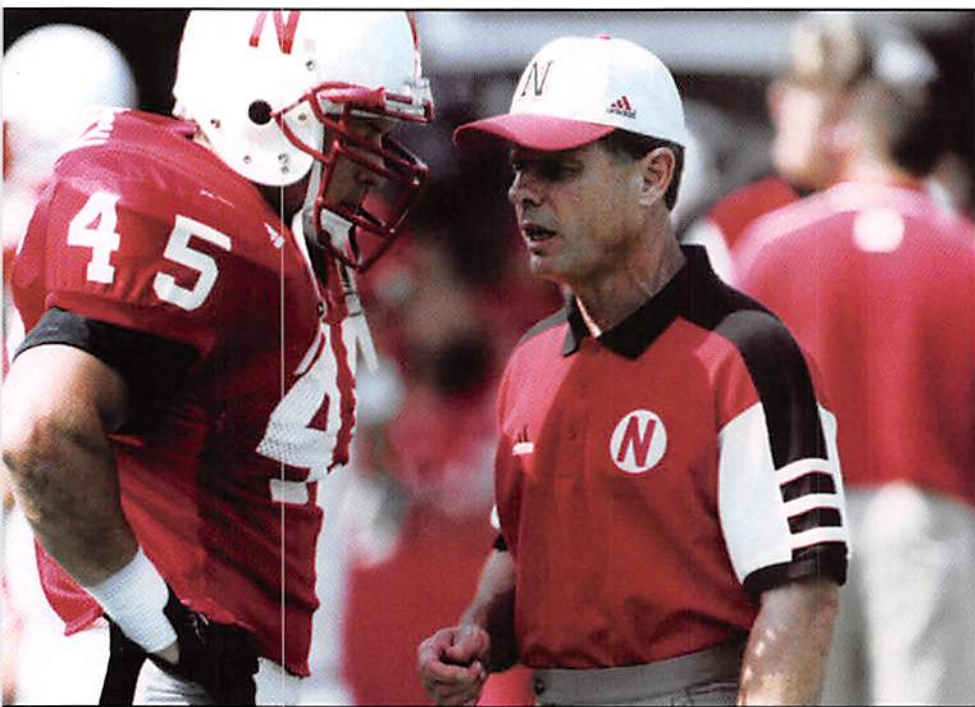
He is among them, after starting six games, including the final four after Bobby Newcombe was sidelined by a PCL injury. In all, 19 players with starting experience at 14 positions return.

Nebraska is two-deep at several positions, among them quarterback, where Newcombe will compete with Crouch for the starting job after missing spring practice following knee surgery.

If one or both can remain healthy, the offense should be more productive. The shuffling of quarterbacks contributed to an offensive inconsistency uncharacteristic of the Cornhuskers. Even so, they ranked first in the conference in rushing, third in scoring and fourth in total offense.

And that was using three different starting I-backs as well as three different starting quarterbacks. Monte Christo started the Texas game, after replacing Newcombe in the Missouri game.

Correll Buckhalter, the leading rusher with 799 yards and eight touchdowns, was the only one of the top I-backs to practice in the spring, though DeAngelo Evans did return for non-contact workouts near the end. Dan Alexander spent the spring rehabilitating a knee after reconstructive surgery.



Frank Solich's first season as head coach began with a 56-26 victory over Louisiana Tech in the Eddie Robinson Football Classic on Aug. 29, 1998, and ended with a 23-20 loss to Arizona in the Holiday Bowl on Dec. 30. Solich meets with Louisiana Tech Coach Gary Crowton after the opener (above left) and meets the media alongside rush end Mike Rucker (above right) after the Holiday Bowl. After spending game days in the press box as a Tom Osborne assistant, Solich was front and center on the sideline in 1998. The former Nebraska fullback talks to co-captain and fullback Joel Makovicka (left) during a game last season.



Fullback Willie Miller and tackle Adam Julch were among the other projected starters on offense who missed all or most of spring practice. If Solich expected the injury problems that plagued the Cornhuskers throughout the season to be gone in the spring, he was greatly disappointed.

"If you look back over the years, you kind of count on most of your top-liners being in there and holding up through the season," he said after practice one day in the spring.

"There have been those years where I-backs have gone down and we've had depth there that has been called upon. And on rare occasions (the same) at the quarterback spot.

"But generally speaking, we've been fortunate there (at the two positions). And then you start going down the list of wide receivers who were banged up, the tight ends and

on the defensive side of it. Some very important guys to the overall scheme of things were taken out of it."

Solich was hard-pressed to explain the rash of injuries that have debilitated his team.

"I've talked to the trainers. I've talked to the doctors," he said. "And their feeling is that it's really unusual. They can't put a finger on it. So I guess as we look at it, there's probably not much that we would have done differently in terms of preparing. We would have taken the same approach.

"We certainly think it was unfortunate that we had the number of injuries we did."

One positive in the spring was that young players and backups had an opportunity to work with higher units than they would have otherwise, which should help develop

depth. Sophomore Dave Volk, for example, filled in for Julch on the left side. He'll be the third tackle in the fall.

As is the case with Julch, the other first-team offensive linemen all have starting experience to varying degrees. Right tackle Jason Schwab was the only one to start every game, however.

James Sherman and Russ Hochstein are the guards, and Dominic Raiola has settled in at center, after dividing time between guard and center, as Josh Heskew's backup. Jon Rutherford and Matt Baldwin emerged from the spring as the top backups, Rutherford at guard and Baldwin at center.

Though the statistics didn't necessarily reflect it, the offensive line apparently played well during the spring. At least that was the opinion of veteran defensive coordinator



"I can speak from the defensive side because I see it as much as anybody. This is probably the most improved offensive line I've seen during the spring since I've been here."

— **Charlie McBride, defensive coordinator**

Charlie McBride.

"I can speak from the defensive side because I see it as much as anybody," he said following the Spring Game. "This is probably the most improved offensive line I've seen during the spring since I've been here. A lot of people were kind of down on them, which was not right. But they really stuck together and continued to do it. And they'll keep it up through the summer, I know."

"I think they're going to have a great offensive line. To me, if you're going to take one spot, I'd say from what I saw this spring, the offensive line made the biggest improvement we had."

Blocking on the perimeter and downfield were a focus for the tight ends and wide receivers, of course. T.J. DeBates and Wistrom are the top

tight ends. Matt Davison returns at split end, and Shevin Wiggins returns at wide receiver, after being granted another season of eligibility.

The NCAA's decision regarding Wiggins, who was second to Davison in pass receptions last season, wasn't made until just before the Red-White game, so he watched instead of playing.

His coming back is also a blessing to Nebraska's return game.

There were fewer questions to be answered about the defense in the spring.

"We've got a pretty good bunch of guys who know what they're doing," said McBride. "You put that first bunch out there, and they're no neophytes. You know what I'm saying?"

In addition, "the whole defense is

a bunch of hard-nosed guys," he said.

Although they were occasionally susceptible to big plays, the Blackshirts were for the most part solid last season, ranking second in the Big 12 against the run and third in scoring defense.

Ten starters at seven positions return: cornerbacks Ralph Brown and Erwin Swiney, rovers Mike Brown and Joe Walker, free safety Clint Finley, strongside linebackers Tony Ortiz and Brian Shaw, weak-side linebacker Eric Johnson and tackles Loran Kaiser and Steve Warren.

Julius Jackson has yet to start, but he's experienced and will enter fall camp sharing No. 1 with Johnson at weakside linebacker. Cornerback Keyuo Craver also has a Blackshirt,

and rush ends Kyle Vanden Bosch and Aaron Wills will be issued them in the fall, as will middle linebacker Carlos Polk.

Walker has established himself among the top kick returners in the conference. Otherwise, the kicking game is something of an unknown quantity, with redshirted freshman Josh Brown and senior Dan Hadenfeldt, a walkon, continuing their competition during two-a-days in the fall.

"We have the potential for a very fine kicking game," said Solich. "We'll see how it goes."

Nebraska would seem to have the potential for a very fine team, one that probably should be favored in the north division of the Big 12, if it can remain healthy. The Cornhuskers are experienced, and their coach is a season of frustration wiser. "The pressure's off, I think," Crouch said.

"When he starts out his first year, a lot of things are thrown at you and a lot of things are happening because of Coach Osborne leaving. I don't think Coach Solich has changed much.

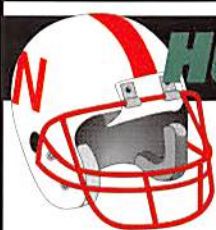
"He knows the tradition here because he's been around for 20 years and he really knows what to do to get the things done that need to be done to have a winning team, a national championship team. So I think he's right on stride with everything. This year, he knows what to expect."

Solich also knows that success depends on learning from the past and then setting it aside. That's what he has tried to do, and based on what he saw in the spring, his players have done so as well.

"I know this returning group is not down about what happened (last season) because, again, winning nine games isn't all bad," Solich said. "But the standard is so high that . . . you know the expectations of this group will be tremendously high, and the fans' (expectations) will be tremendously high."

Fan expectations, no doubt, include a victory in the Big 12 playoff at the Alamodome in San Antonio, followed by a trip to the Superdome in New Orleans for the national championship game.

The Cornhuskers expect no less. But presumably their expectations are tempered by what is realistic. ■



HUSKERS AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 1999 FINISH:

1999 SCHEDULE

Sept. 4	@ Iowa	11 a.m. (ABC)
Sept. 11	California	2:30 p.m. (ABC)
Sept. 18	So. Mississippi	TBA
Sept. 25	@ Missouri	TBA
Oct. 2	Oklahoma St.	TBA
Oct. 9	Iowa St.	TBA
Oct. 23	@ Texas	TBA
Oct. 30	@ Kansas	TBA
Nov. 6	Texas A&M	TBA
Nov. 13	Kansas St.	TBA
Nov. 27	@ Colorado	1:30 p.m. (ABC)

(Times are subject to change and are Central)



NORTH DIVISION

1998 RECORD: 9-4 CONFERENCE RECORD: 5-3

A 29	Louisiana Tech%	W, 56-27
S 5	UAB	W, 38-7
S 12	@ California	W, 24-3
S 26	Washington	W, 55-7
O 3	vs. Oklahoma St.!	W, 24-17
O 10	@ Texas A&M	L, 28-21
O 17	Kansas	W, 41-0
O 24	Missouri	W, 20-13
O 31	Texas	L, 20-16
N 7	@ Iowa St.	W, 42-7
N 14	@ Kansas St.	L, 40-30
N 27	Colorado	W, 16-14
D 30	vs. Arizona&	L, 23-20

% Eddie Robinson Classic, Lincoln, Neb.
! Arrowhead Stadium, Kansas City
& Holiday Bowl, San Diego

POST SPRING DEPTH CHART

SE 3	Matt Davison**	6-1	180	Jr.	LR 81	Aaron Wills***	6-2	250	Sr.
18	Wilson Thomas	6-5	210	Fr.	57	Chris Kelsay	6-5	255	Fr.
20	Tom Beveridge	6-0	190	Jr.	or 92	Justin Smith	6-4	250	Fr.
or 80	Larry Henderson	6-1	190	Sr.	93	Brandon Mooberry	6-5	245	Jr.
LT 69	ADAM JULCH***	6-5	320	Sr.	NT 96	STEVE WARREN***	6-2	315	Sr.
58	Dave Volk*	6-5	295	So.	70	Jason Lohr*	6-2	275	So.
72	Leif Sidwell	6-5	280	Fr.	55	Jon Clanton	6-2	270	Fr.
LG 63	JAMES SHERMAN***	6-4	295	Sr.	DT 91	LORAN KAISER**	6-4	290	Jr.
64	Steve Alstadt	6-5	275	So.	56	Jeremy Slechta*	6-6	280	So.
77	Mike Wilford	6-3	300	Fr.	89	Luis Almanzar*	6-3	290	Jr.
C 54	Dominic Raiola*	6-2	295	So.	RR 83	Kyle Vanden Bosch**	6-4	270	Jr.
51	Matt Baldwin**	6-2	285	Sr.	95	J.P. Wichmann	6-4	220	So.
78	Aaron Havlovic	6-4	280	Sr.	or 98	Demoiné Adams	6-2	225	Fr.
or 53	Matt Shook	6-2	270	Fr.		Eric Ryan	6-1	235	Sr.
RG 55	RUSS HOCHSTEIN**	6-3	280	Jr.	SLB 37	TONY ORTIZ***	6-1	220	Sr.
66	Jon Rutherford*	6-3	295	So.	46	BRIAN SHAW***	6-1	220	Sr.
59	Wes Cody	6-2	275	Fr.	30	Scott Shanle	6-2	225	Fr.
RT 65	JASON SCHWAB**	6-1	300	Sr.	41	Rod Baker	6-0	225	Jr.
75	Kyle Kollmorgen*	6-5	290	So.	or 44	Jon Penny	6-1	225	So.
76	Billy Diekmann	6-3	290	Jr.	MLB 13	Carlos Polk**	6-2	250	Jr.
or 68	Scott Koethe	6-5	320	Fr.	39	Ben Buettnerback***	5-11	220	Sr.
TE 85	T.J. DeBates***	6-3	250	Sr.	or 48	Jamie Burrow*	6-1	235	So.
and 87	Tracey Wistrom*	6-5	220	So.	52	Jon Coyne	6-4	220	So.
94	Damien Bauman*	6-3	260	Sr.	or 90	Tony Tata	6-1	240	Fr.
or 99	Aaron Golliday	6-4	270	Fr.	WLB 27	ERIC JOHNSON***	6-1	250	Sr.
84	Jon Bowling	6-3	240	Fr.	50	Julius Jackson***	6-1	240	Sr.
or 90	Jake McKee	6-2	230	Jr.	47	Josh Kohl***	6-1	230	Sr.
QB 12	BOBBY NEWCOMBE**	6-0	195	Jr.	9	Mark Vedral*	5-11	210	So.
or 7	ERIC CROUCH*	6-1	195	So.	or 34	Randy Stella	6-0	205	Fr.
16	Jay Runty*	6-0	205	Jr.	LCB 3	Keyuo Craver*	5-10	190	So.
or 5	Jeff Perino*	6-2	215	Sr.	or 16	ERWIN SWINEY**	6-0	185	Jr.
FB 15	Willie Miller**	6-1	240	Jr.	28	Josh Anderson*	5-8	175	Jr.
22	Ben Kingston**	6-1	240	Sr.	FS 19	CLINT FINLEY**	6-0	205	Jr.
or 35	Tyrone Uhlir	6-0	210	Fr.	32	Greg McGraw*	6-2	200	So.
IB 4	DeAngelo Evans**	5-9	215	Jr.	14	Dion Booker*	6-1	205	So.
or 36	CORRELL BUCKHALTER*	6-0	220	Jr.	ROV 21	MIKE BROWN***	5-10	205	Sr.
or 38	Dan Alexander**	6-0	245	Jr.	29	Gregg List***	5-11	220	Sr.
30	Dahrran Diedrick	6-0	215	Fr.	or 20	Wes Woodward*	5-8	180	So.
or 34	Chris Butler	5-11	200	Fr.	42	Troy Watchorn*	5-11	200	Jr.
WB 5	SEHEVIN WIGGINS***	5-11	200	Sr.	or 2	Mike Demps	5-10	195	Fr.
82	Sean Applegate**	5-9	185	Sr.	RCB 22	RALPH BROWN***	5-10	180	Sr.
OR 8	John Gibson*	6-0	180	Jr.	5	DeJuan Groce	5-10	190	Fr.
or 1	Frankie London***	5-11	170	Sr.	18	Jeff Hemje*	6-0	185	So.
18	Troy Hassebrook	6-4	220	Fr.	P 17	Dan Hadenfeldt*	5-11	190	Sr.
or 42	Dwayne McClary	5-11	185	Fr.	23	Josh Brown	6-2	185	Fr.
PK 23	Josh Brown	6-2	185	Fr.					
17	Dan Hadenfeldt*	5-11	190	Sr.					

INJURED

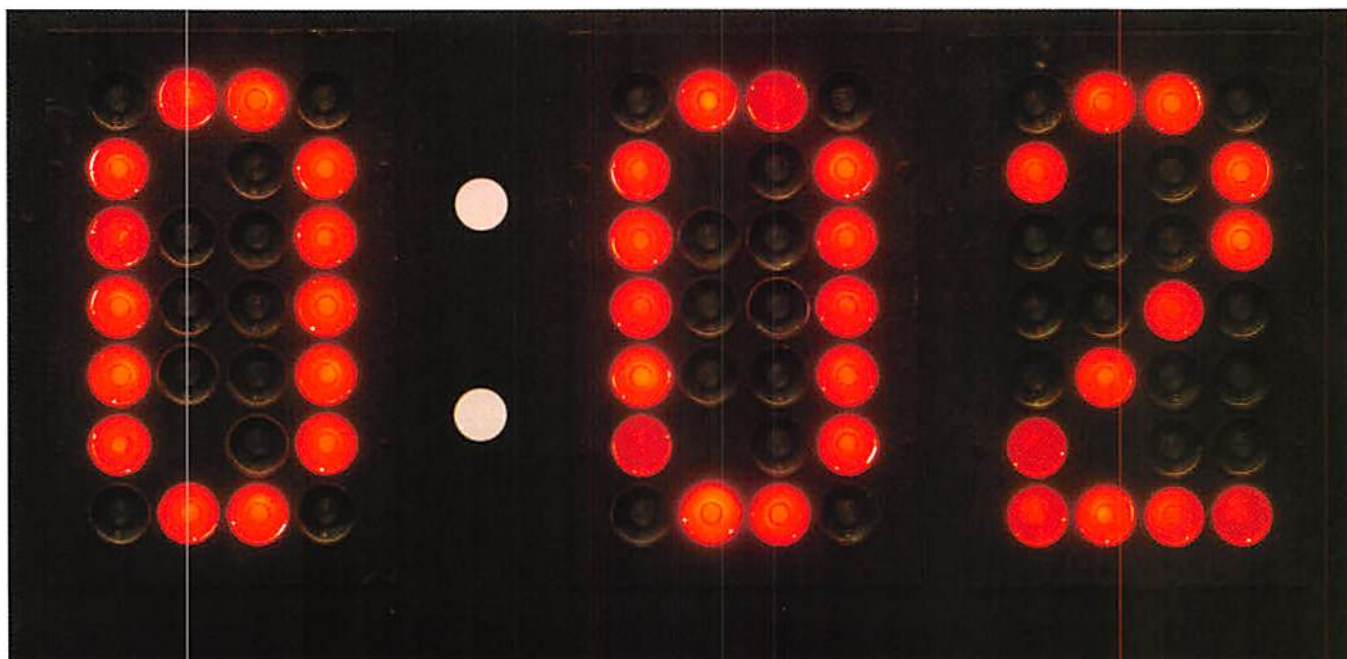
OT 67	Nate Kolterman	6-3	310	Fr.
IB	DeAntae Grixby	5-8	200	Fr.
WB	Ben Cornelison	5-10	175	Fr.

INJURED

ROV 25	JOE WALKER*	5-10	195	Jr.
ROV	Brandon Quintid	5-11	200	Jr.

* Letters earned. Returning lettermen in bold. Starters in CAPS

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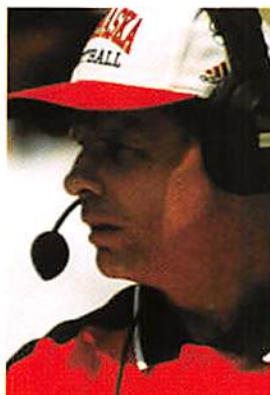


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QUARTERBACK

Bobby Newcombe was among the missing during spring practice. And Eric Crouch was among those who missed him, even though he and Newcombe are competing for the same starting job.

"Ever since I've been here, he was competing," Crouch said in the spring. "Every time someone gets hurt, you always wish they were out on the field, and since he's not out here, you're short a player that you're used to having around. You miss him because he's such a great athlete."

"You miss his big-play potential, the things he can do for the team."

Crouch can empathize with Newcombe, who also arrived in the fall of 1997. Crouch sat out his first season as a medical redshirt, undergoing surgery on his right ankle and left knee, while Newcombe played, first as a backup quarterback and then as a wingback and punt returner.

The two competed with Frankie London for the starting quarterback's job last spring, with Newcombe emerging atop the depth chart with Crouch behind him and London moving to wingback.

Crouch started twice after Newcombe suffered a PCL injury in the opener against Louisiana Tech, then suffered a hamstring pull, which kept him out of the Washington game, and a hip pointer, which limited him to holding for placement kicks during the Texas, Kansas and Missouri games.

London also was sidelined by a broken leg, as a rash of injuries contributed to a significant drop in offensive production and the Cornhuskers' first four-loss season since 1968.

That was the low point of the season for Crouch. "It just seemed like when all the injuries were happening, you kind of drop your jaw and you're thinking: 'My goodness, I can't believe this happened again, another injury to another starter. How are we going to deal with it? What changes do we have to make during the week?' It had so many effects on how we played (offensively)," he said.

"A lot of times, we didn't know who was going to play."

After a starter went down with an injury, someone else had to step in. "You're trying to get that person ready to play on Saturday, and you've only got five days to do it," said Crouch.

"That was really tough for me as a quarterback, gaining some consistency with other players and other players gaining some type of consistency with me when I was in there."

"That was something I thought about a lot, how it affected our season."

Crouch started six games, including the Holiday Bowl loss, in which he rushed for 28 yards and completed 12-of-28 passes for 193 yards and two touchdowns, with two interceptions.

During the regular season, he rushed for 459 yards and five touchdowns and completed 49-of-101 passes for 601 yards and four touchdowns. "His strong suit, without question, is the option game," Coach Frank Solich said after the spring game. "He executes the option with great quickness and speed, getting to the corners. So I thought it was important for him to work hard on his passing this spring."

"We did work hard on that. We would like for him to increase his passing percentage. This past season, I thought he played tremendously well, but that was one area we felt, and we made sure that he understood, that we would like to see him improve on. And if you add it up, he had a good spring."

Crouch was hampered in the spring by a green pullover jersey, identifying him as off-limits to tacklers. It kept him from being injured, but "all in all, that makes it very difficult for a player, and really for a unit, to execute an offense," said Solich. "It really cuts down the number of options you run."

Crouch tried to ignore the green jersey, which he considered a "smart idea" because the Cornhuskers couldn't afford to have him join Newcombe on the sideline as a spectator.

But "personally, I'd rather not wear it," Crouch said.

He worked hard preparing for the spring and performed well in post-winter conditioning testing, running the 40-yard dash in 4.47 seconds, the fastest on the team.



Scott Bruhn

With Newcombe sidelined for the spring, Jay Runty got in a lot of action.

Scott Bruhn

OUTLOOK

QUARTERBACK Returning

Bobby Newcombe

Eric Crouch

Jay Runty

Lost

Monte Christo



To avoid getting another quarterback injured, Eric Crouch wore a green jersey in scrimmages during the spring and the Spring Game.

He also gained some weight during the winter, "a good five or 10 pounds," he said. "But my goal wasn't really to gain a lot of weight. My goal was just to get stronger and faster. Naturally when you get stronger and faster, you're putting on a little bit more weight, and that's usually muscle."

Crouch is more comfortable with a season's experience. "I'd have to say that I feel 10 times better than I did last year," he said. "I

learned a lot, so I don't think there are too many situations that I could be put in this year that are going to make me feel uncomfortable. I feel more relaxed and confident."

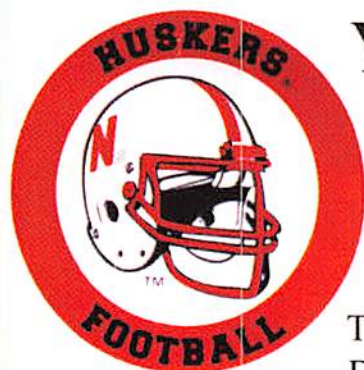
He expects to be even more confident in directing the offense by the time two-a-day practices begin in the fall. He plans to remain in Lincoln, working with the Pacific Pals program as he did last summer if he can fit it into his class schedule and spending time with the other offensive players.

"It's going to be the first game at Iowa before we know it, so I want to work and do everything I possibly can to make this team better," he said. "I think the biggest thing for me is taking the things from the spring that I've learned that are new, taking them and kind of building them in the summer."

Crouch made some freshman mistakes last season, among them cutting off his hip pads. That contributed to his suffering the hip-pointer in the Oklahoma State game. "I'm not going to cut my hip pads off," he said with a smile. "There were a lot of things I learned last year, and that's one of them." ■



Bobby Newcombe was an interested observer on the sideline during the Spring Game.



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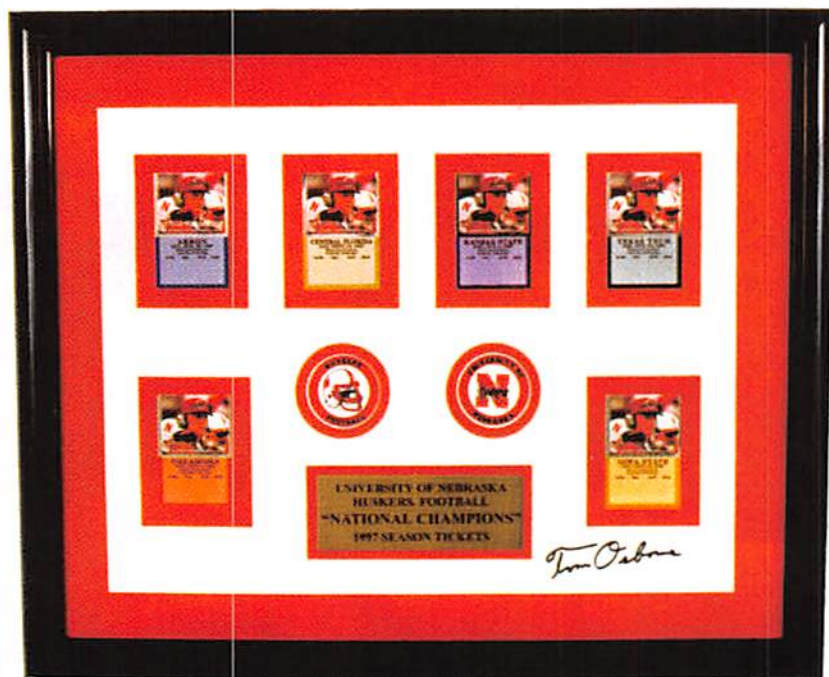


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I-BACK/FULLBACK

DeAngelo Evans returned to practice on the third Friday of the spring. He felt "out of sync" he told a handful of reporters.

His voice was barely audible. Even though he hadn't participated in contact work, and wouldn't the remainder of the spring, "I thought it would be important to get out there," he said.

Earlier, Coach Frank Solich had said the same thing. "I think it's real important, not only for the fact that, timing wise, it was good to have him running with the 1s but (also) for himself, feeling good about where he's at and confident coming out in the spring that he is healthy and ready to go."

Evans hadn't been healthy and ready to go, relatively speaking, since the Holiday Bowl game, for which he returned after a frustrating season in which he played in only three games.

He carried just four times against Arizona, then underwent arthroscopic surgery to repair torn cartilage in his left knee.

"The knee feels fine," he said. "I'm just trying to take it a day at a time."

If Evans has learned anything since arriving in 1996, it's that. He missed the 1997 season because of a pelvic injury that required two surgeries, and he was hampered by injuries last season, beginning with a left knee strain for which he underwent arthroscopic surgery the week before the opener.

He was sidelined for three games, then returned to rush for 146 yards and three touchdowns against Washington, only to be slowed by a toe injury and then a severely bruised tailbone.

The tailbone bruise and the sore left knee, which continued to bother him throughout the season, sent him back to the sideline after only two more games, in which he played sparingly.

"Last year was weird . . . the last two years, really," said Evans. "I really don't want to keep bringing it up all the time. Some things you just can't control. There's no magic secret."

The experiences of the past two seasons have made Evans philosophical.

"You're not going to change anything," he said. "You just try to go step-by-step."

Solich is hoping Evans will be able to step back into the lineup and perform as he did his freshman season, when he rushed for 776 yards and 14 touchdowns as Ahman Green's backup. The touchdowns were the most-ever by a Cornhusker freshman and the yardage was the third-most.

Despite the pain of the pelvic problem that later was corrected by the surgeries, Evans rushed for 130 yards and three touchdowns on 32 carries in the Big 12 championship game loss against Texas. Any questions about his courage and determination should have been dispelled that afternoon.

Nevertheless, such questions were posed last season, creating a situation that perplexed and frustrated him. He began declining reporters' interview requests, as if silence would solve the problem.

"Maybe I reacted a little childish last fall," he told the Lincoln Journal Star.

I-back is a high-profile position at Nebraska, and those who play it have difficulty hiding in silence, particularly those with Evans' potential.

OUTLOOK

I-BACK Returning

DeAngelo Evans
Correll Buckhalter
Dan Alexander

FULLBACK Returning

Willie Miller
Ben Kingston
Lost
Joel Makovicka
Billy Legate

Scott Bruhn



Correll Buckhalter was Nebraska's only healthy I-back for much of the 1998 season and rushed for 799 yards.

Fullback heir apparent Willie Miller missed most of the spring while recovering from surgery.



Nebraska Coach Frank Solich has his eyes on DeAngelo Evans, hoping the I-back can regain the form that produced 776 rushing yards as a true freshman in 1996.

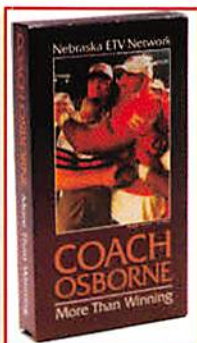
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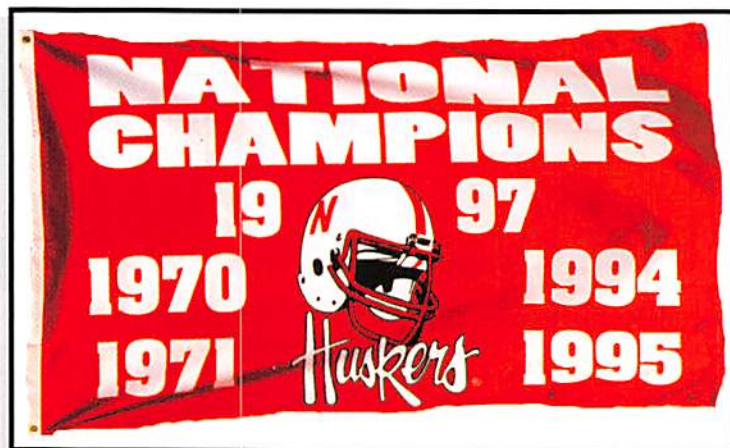
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At his best, based on his performance as a freshman at least, he appears to have the ability of the top running backs in Cornhusker history.

That's why Solich wasn't lamenting Evans' brief appearance at the end of spring practice.

"I really didn't have to see a lot because I know he's a great back," said Solich. "And he'll be a great back again. He just needs a couple of breaks, and certainly one would be to stay healthy. In staying healthy, you also need to go full-go and not try to protect yourself. DeAngelo is that type of player."

Evans is determined to again be the great back to which Solich referred.

"If fall camp gets here, and I'm not ready . . .," he said, pausing.

"In the fall, I'll be ready. If I'm not ready, then . . . what I'm saying is, I'll be ready."

He was more definitive in his interview with the Journal Star, vowing to be in "Jerry Rice shape" by the start of two-a-day practices in August. "I'm going to train like I've never trained before," he said.

"I'm going to go that extra mile because I want to play that much better."

Rice, the future NFL Hall of Fame wide receiver, has a reputation for being well-conditioned.

Conditioning will be important for everyone, not just for Evans and the others who missed all or most of spring practice because of injuries, including Dan Alexander, another I-back.

"There will be 29 practices before that first game," said Solich. "You know, that sounds like maybe a lot, but in two-a-days, which is what a share of those will be, it'll be hot. It'll be tough."

"They'll need to come back in great shape so that they can get through practices at a very good pace in order to get in playing shape. Generally, it doesn't help when you sit out the whole spring."

Nebraska would be solid and three-deep at I-back with a healthy Evans and juniors Correll Buckhalter and Alexander, who was sidelined in the spring following knee surgery.

Buckhalter, the team's rushing leader last season with 799 yards and eight touchdowns, "had a good spring," Solich said after the spring game. "But also we have some guys who were not involved in this spring who are really explosive runners and very big-play makers."


Evans was among those guys. His return will be welcomed. ■

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TIGHT END

The collision was among the most violent of the spring. It involved tight end Tracey Wistrom and cornerback Ralph Brown during a scrimmage. Wistrom had just caught a pass.

"To be honest, I thought I was going to get tackled," said Wistrom, who was near the sideline. "I kind of stuttered for a second. I saw nobody was around me, so I just started running."

He was aware of Brown closing in. "I was getting ready to be tackled," he said. "So I figured instead of going out of bounds, I'd just try to hit Ralph. I think on that one, I came out on top."

Even though witnesses agreed, Wistrom didn't belabor the point.

"I just got up and went back to the huddle," he said. "I didn't say much because usually what goes around comes around. Those defensive backs get some cheapshots on you sometimes when you're running those crossing routes. So I just kind of went on my way. Ralph's a great player. He gave me my credit."

"But he also let me know he's going to get his turn, too."

Wistrom isn't able to hide from defensive backs. He stands 6-foot-4. And if a cornerback has to take on a tight end, he would appear to be about as good as any because of his weight. The sophomore from Webb City, Mo., is no hulking tight end. He was listed at 215 pounds during the spring.

Like many of his teammates, he gained weight, "six or seven pounds," during winter conditioning, but he lost some of that once spring practice began. "Hopefully it was just fat," he said.

"It's hard to retain it all through spring ball. Winter conditioning is a great time to gain weight. I was on the circuit, which is something that helped me build a good foundation for the summer."

He is staying in Lincoln this summer to work on getting bigger and stronger.

Wistrom and senior T.J. DeBates emerged from spring practice as the top tight ends, with Wistrom replacing Sheldon Jackson, an Associated Press first-team All-Big 12 honoree.

Because of his lanky frame, Wistrom might look as if he's playing out of position. "Tracey really looks more like a wide receiver," Coach Frank Solich said prior to last season. "But he has tremendous pop, excellent athletic ability. And we think he'll eventually develop into a fine blocker."

Solich was neither the first nor the last to point out the physical resemblance to a wide receiver. "A lot of people think that," said Wistrom. "I'm sure that crossed Coach (Ron) Brown's mind maybe once or twice . . . until he saw me run the 40, which probably threw that out the window."

Wistrom doesn't have the speed to play wide receiver. But he does have the tenacity to play tight end, as the collision with Brown illustrated. And he's continuing to develop as a blocker.

In fact, he doesn't see his lack of weight as a serious detriment. "It's something I've become more comfortable with," he said. "A lot of people think to block around here, to play tight end at Nebraska, you've got to weigh at least 250 or 260 pounds. I try to make that a false assumption."

"I think if you're a good technician, you come out and get off the ball hard, you stay low and you're stepping with your right foot, that sort of thing, you can be a 220-pound guy and block."

"A guy who weighs 250 pounds might be able to afford not to step with the right foot every time. But at my weight, that's something I have to be real strict on or I'll get blown off the ball."

Wistrom has to finesse defenders rather than overpower them, as some Cornhusker tight ends have done. "You don't necessarily have to change the line of scrimmage every time," he said.

"It's a bonus if you do. But if you can just contain your guy, hook him so the running back can get outside, I think you're going to be able to be a good blocker at Nebraska."

However it is to be accomplished, the perimeter blocking needs to improve if the Cornhuskers are to have the kind of running attack to which they have become accustomed, Solich has said.

Nebraska might have more than enough quality tight ends based on what happened in the spring. After the Red-White game, Solich said that although he wouldn't identify individual players, "I'll talk in general terms. A lot of our young tight ends, I thought, were really impressive."

"I think we're going to have a group of tight ends, many of them younger guys, who can come off the ball and block very well and yet have the ability to be very good pass receivers. So I think that spot is going to be very promising for us. That was pleasing to see those guys respond the way they did. And they'll just keep getting better because many of those guys are young."

Wistrom is among the youngsters, and he's still growing. "I know the weight's eventually going to come," he said. "It's just a matter of time, whenever nature takes its course."

"Hopefully, it's sooner rather than later." ■



T.J. DeBates has earned three letters as a backup tight end.

OUTLOOK

TIGHT END Returning

T.J. DeBates
Tracey Wistrom
Damien Bauman
Jake McKee

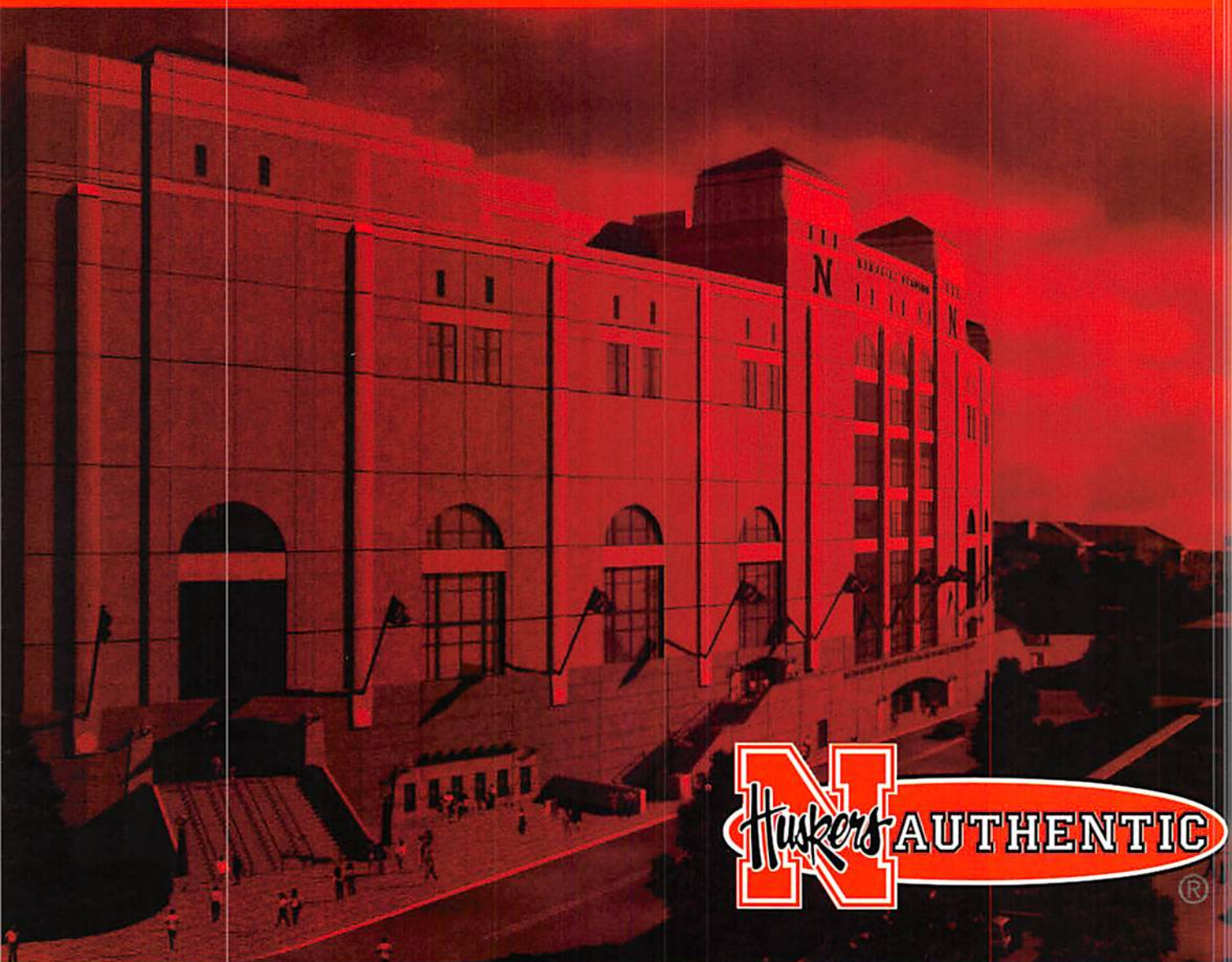
Lost

Sheldon Jackson

Tracey Wistrom's playing time increased significantly last season after DeBates was hampered by a knee injury that caused him to miss two games.



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SPLIT END/WINGBACK

Sean Applegate was interested in Nebraska football before he met Zeke Cisco. He grew up in Lincoln, after all, and like so many young boys, imagined himself playing for the Cornhuskers.

If not for Cisco, however, Applegate might not have walked on.

"Pretty much he was a big motivator," said Applegate. "It was probably my dream before I met Zeke. But seeing him and maybe a couple of the other players was kind of important I think."

Cisco, a walkon from Monroe, Mich., earned three letters as a defensive back and special teams player from 1991 to 1993. He also was a volunteer in the Husker Teammates program, sponsored by former Cornhusker Coach Tom Osborne and wife Nancy, and served as Applegate's mentor.

Later, after Applegate decided to walk on at Nebraska, Cisco encouraged him, telling him "don't hold back. If you make a mistake, make it going all out," Applegate said. "Don't give a half-effort."

The senior wingback heeded Cisco's advice and quickly earned a reputation for his tenacity, said receivers coach Ron Brown. "You won't find anybody more heated up than Sean."

"He's very feisty, a tough kid. I like his competitive drive."

Despite being only 5-foot-9 and 185 pounds, Applegate is an aggressive blocker. He's not one to back down. He made a crack-back block on 6-6, 280-pound defensive tackle Jeremy Slechta during a scrimmage that was one of the "big hits" of the spring, according to Brown.

"It's all about leverage. You can be 180 and take out a guy who's 300 if you hit him right," said Applegate, who weighed "probably 160" when he was a freshman. "I was tiny."

"But I hit the weight room pretty hard the first year or two here, gained some weight and really kind of reached a plateau, stayed where I am right now. This is a good weight for me."

Because of his size, Applegate switched from quarterback to wide receiver at Lincoln High, figuring that would be a position he could play in college. Lincoln High's offense was run-oriented, however, so playing wide receiver "wasn't the best way to showcase my abilities," he said.

"Actually, I think I'm a better pass receiver than I am a blocker. But they use me as a blocker. Last year I got to play behind Lance (Brown) and Shevin (Wiggins) . . . on blocking downs."

Applegate has only one pass reception in his three seasons. The reception, against Akron in 1997, went for a 9-yard gain. "I got stopped on like the 2-yard line," he said. "I was happy and mad at the same time. I was so close and I got stuffed. But that's probably the play I appreciate the most."

He paused and added with a smile: "I do kind of like getting the opportunity to whack some linebackers around when I get the chance, too. Those are some other memorable moments."

Major college recruiters weren't exactly beating a path to his door out of high school. He sent a videotape to Nebraska and a couple of days later, Osborne called.

"It really wasn't much of a recruiting process when it came to me," said Applegate.

"Do you want to walk on?" Osborne wanted to know.

"Sure," Applegate replied. "Sounds good to me."

He was among some three dozen walkons in 1995, as he remembers it. "You're like, 'Wow, I'm a



Junior split end Matt Davison was the leading receiver with 32 catches for 394 yards.

OUTLOOK

SPLIT END **Returning**

Matt Davison
Craig Fischer
Tom Beveridge

Lost

Kenny Cheatham
Billy Haafke

WINGBACK **Returning**

Shevin Wiggins
Frankie London
John Gibson
Sean Applegate

Lost

Lance Brown

Nebraska coaches received a bonus when wingback Shevin Wiggins was granted another year of eligibility.



Nebraska football player,' and you bust your butt pretty hard for a while," he said. "The first couple of years went pretty fast, then the next one seemed to drag. But overall it's been pretty decent.

"I knew if I put my heart into what I went after, I wouldn't be denied, in my eyes anyway. I don't know. I'm surprised at how many people quit. But it's easy to get discouraged. Definitely.

"I think all scholarship guys probably should make it. But if there's a walkon who makes it through five years of this place, he should get the Congressional Medal of Honor in my eyes."

Applegate hasn't gotten any medals, nor will he. But he had his picture taken with President Clinton at the White House after the 1997 season, and he has two national championship rings. He also got to play for Osborne, which is "something I'll take with me. He's quite the man."

The anonymity of being a walkon and a backup doesn't bother Applegate.

"Actually, I like it," he said. "If you go hang out with a bunch of people, the first thing everybody whispers is: 'He's a football player.' But in that respect it's kind of nice because it doesn't happen a whole bunch to me. I'd much rather be known as a good person than as a football player.

"I'd like that reputation to precede me more than anything else."

He has earned such a reputation already, Brown said. "The other players really like Sean. He spends a lot of time with the younger guys. He's been very encouraging to them."

Applegate has succeeded in the classroom as well as on the field. He was a first-team Academic All-Big 12 honoree, with a 3.317 cumulative grade-point average in a pre-education major.

His career goal is to be a vocational teacher and eventually a coach. "Sean has come a long way," said Brown. "He's battled through a lot of things off the field as well."

Cisco told him it wouldn't be easy and it hasn't been. There have been times when Applegate thought things wouldn't work out. "Probably every day for the last three years," he said.

Exactly why he has kept going when others have given up "I don't know," he said. "I guess just the fact that I started something, and once you start something, you need to finish it." ■

Senior wingback Sean Applegate has earned a reputation for his tenacity.



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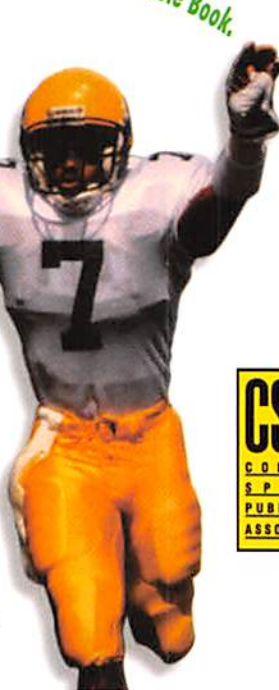
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OFFENSIVE LINE

Dominic Raiola, Nebraska's sophomore center, wrote "stay low" and "hands" on the tape wrapped around his wrists during practice in the spring, just as a reminder.

Former Cornhusker Aaron Graham suggested it. And "it helped," said Raiola.

Graham, one of eight centers who have earned All-America honors at Nebraska over the past 25 seasons, spent time in Lincoln during the off-season working out.

He is a three-year veteran of the NFL's Arizona Cardinals. He also is a role model for Raiola, who has settled in at center after playing offensive guard as a redshirted freshman.

Raiola started the final two games, including the Holiday Bowl, at left guard, becoming the first freshman to start in the Cornhusker offensive line since Rob Zatechka did it in 1991.

Raiola, who regularly took snaps at center in practice last season and was the No. 1 deep-snapper for punts, field goals and extra-point kicks, is now a center full-time, succeeding Josh Heskew.

He studied videotape of Graham, "as much as I could," to help him make the switch.

Even better, "in the off-season, we did a lot of drills with him," Raiola said.

He also got tips from Graham, who "helped me with my steps and my hands, staying low," said Raiola. "One day he told me to write on the tape 'stay low' and 'hands' so that I remembered to do it. With guys like that helping us out... that's super. I mean, who could ask for more than that?"

"I don't think you could go anywhere else and probably find the same thing."

That might be a stretch. But Nebraska's tradition of outstanding centers, and offensive linemen in general, certainly provides a good context to switch from one interior position to another.

In addition to Graham (1995), Rik Bonness (1974-75), Tom Davis (1977), Dave Rimington (1981-82), Mark Traynowicz (1984), Bill Lewis (1985), Jake Young (1988-89) and Aaron Taylor (1996) have earned All-America recognition of some sort during the last quarter-century.

Rimington and Taylor also won three Outland Trophies between them, though Taylor played guard as a senior in 1997, the year he earned the award as the nation's best collegiate lineman.

In any case, if Raiola develops as expected, he'll follow in a tradition of which he is well aware.

But "it's not automatic that you're going to be a great center here," he said. "I think all those guys putting in the hard work is what did it. And that's what I'm trying to do. I'm not just going to take for granted that Nebraska has great centers. I think that would be silly, because nothing is automatic here."

Fans might have assumed seasons of 11 or more victories and serious runs at national championships were automatic after Nebraska's remarkable success from 1993 to 1997. But the error of such thinking became painfully apparent last season, when the Cornhuskers finished 9-4.

The line took considerable criticism for Nebraska's offensive woes.

OUTLOOK

LEFT TACKLE

Returning

Adam Julch

Dave Volk

LEFT GUARD

Returning

James Sherman

Jon Rutherford

Lost

Brandt Wade

CENTER

Returning

Dominic Raiola

Matt Baldwin

Lost

Josh Heskew

RIGHT GUARD

Returning

Russ Hochstein

Lost

Ben Gessford

RIGHT TACKLE

Returning

Jason Schwab

Lost

Jeff Clausen



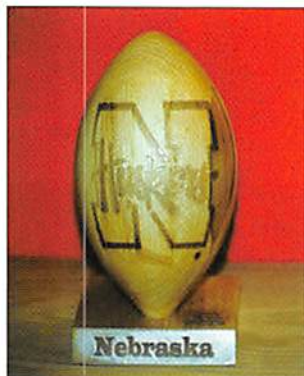
Senior tackle Adam Julch (with offensive line coach Milt Tenopir) was like another coach when an injury forced him to sit out most of the spring.

Senior tackle Jason Schwab, an honorable mention All-Big 12 selection, was the only Nebraska offensive lineman to start every game.



Sophomore center Dominic Raiola is well aware of the tradition surrounding Nebraska's offensive line, but he realizes that nothing can be taken for granted.

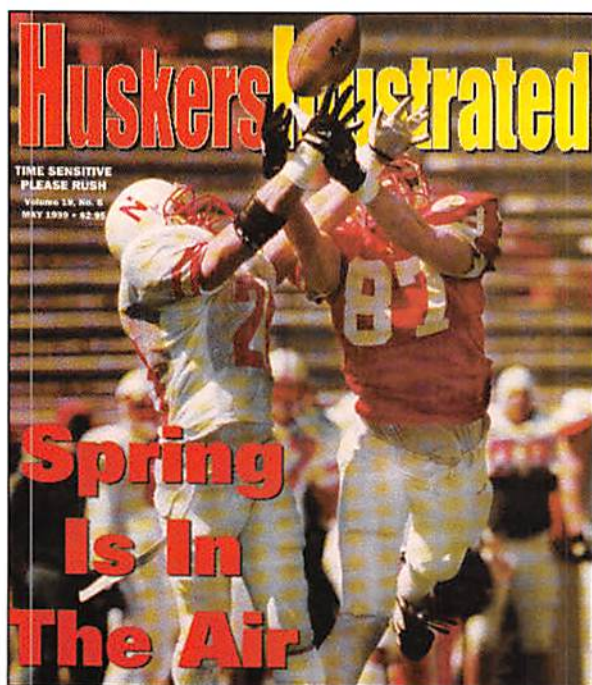
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Raiola has committed himself to regaining the respect enjoyed by previous Nebraska offensive lines. And he saw a similar commitment from those around him during spring practice.

The offensive line has developed an attitude, and "Dominic is kind of the ringleader of everything," said tight end Tracey Wistrom. "Those guys are kind of falling in line with him, kind of doing the same thing. They're going to have a nastiness to them and be pretty dominant this year, I think."

Raiola admits to being an emotional player. He was fourth among the linemen in pancake blocks with 76, and he was credited with six tackles, including two in the Holiday Bowl game, on the punt coverage team. "I think it's really needed in my game," he said of his emotional intensity.

He's also hypercritical of himself, a perfectionist who has difficulty setting aside what he considers to be sub-par performances. "There's always room for improvement," he said. "That's understood. I don't care what it is. My dad put that on me, never be satisfied with what I do, to always get better."

"That's just the way I play. I couldn't see it any other way. I have a lot of energy on the field."

Whether that rubs off on his linemates is uncertain. But he did see a fire in the spring, "especially when we go one-on-one pass rush with the defense," he said before the spring game. "I've seen a big difference. We're a lot more aggressive. A lot of people are taking it upon themselves."

"If they mess up, they're taking it pretty seriously. It needs to be that way. Last year it was like: 'Well, OK, we'll get 'em next time.' The intensity level needs to be up, and we'll get things done."

The offensive line also forged a unique bond during winter conditioning and spring practice.

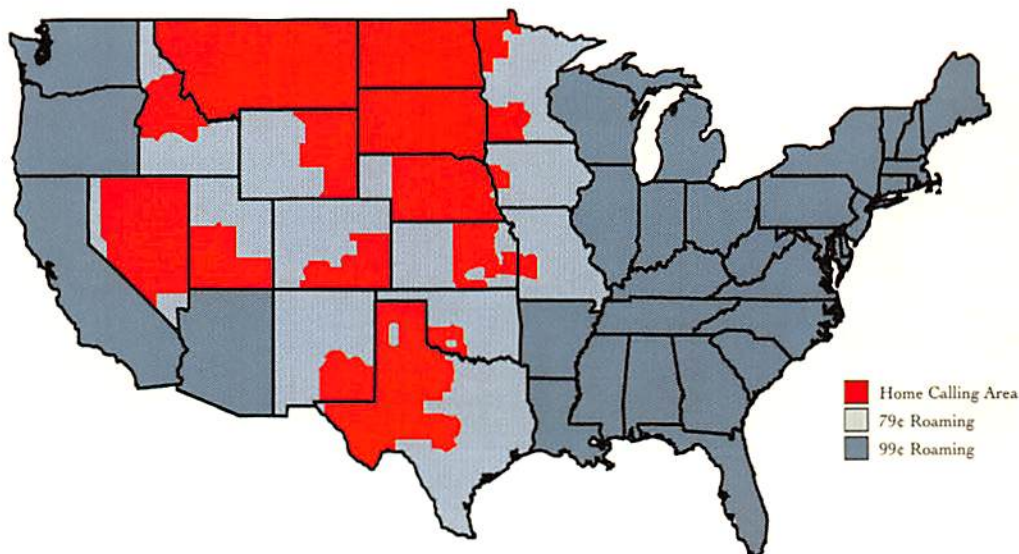
"I think that's where it all starts, the unity," said Raiola. "Because if you can't trust a guy, how are you going to play next to him? You want to be able to trust each other."

Senior tackle Adam Julch missed all of spring practice except the final non-contact workout before the Red-White game. But he made certain he was involved by helping the young linemen.

There were typically three stations during practice. Milt Tenopir and Dan Young, the offensive line coaches, handled two of the stations, and Julch often worked with the third.

"He was like a coach," Raiola said. As Graham was for him. ■

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DEFENSIVE TACKLE

During a drill in spring practice, defensive coordinator Charlie McBride wanted a replacement for Steve Warren at defensive tackle. "Hey, skinny guy, you go in for Steve," he yelled.

The "skinny guy" to whom he referred was Jeremy Slechta, who weighs 280 pounds. "I don't know," Slechta said later. "I weigh 280, but I look 250."

Maybe that's because the sophomore from LaVista, Neb., stands 6-foot-6. But whatever the reason, Slechta takes good-natured ribbing about his weight from his Nebraska teammates.

His nickname is "pence," an abbreviation for pencil. "They'll just never let me live it down, I guess," said Slechta. "I could come in next year weighing 320 and they would still say I'm skinny."

Granted, he weighed "about 250" when he arrived at Nebraska last fall. He worked hard in the weight room, however, and by the end of winter conditioning, he weighed a solid 280 pounds.

He dropped "about five pounds" during spring practice because he "wasn't able to hit the weight room as hard," but by the start of fall camp he will have gained that weight back, and then some.

Slechta has a body frame that will fill out. That was evident when he was recruited out of Papillion-LaVista High School, where he played rush end on defense and tackle on offense. Though his size seemed suited to rush end, the Cornhuskers were interested in him as a tackle, on defense or offense.

When former coach Tom Osborne "offered me a scholarship, he said they looked at me and if I

OUTLOOK

NOSETACKLE

Returning

Steve Warren

Jason Lohr

Lost

Jason Wiltz

TACKLE

Returning

Loran Kaiser

Jeremy Slechta

Luis Almanzar



Scott Bruhn



Jeremy Slechta (56, left) expected to redshirt, but an injury to Jason Wiltz changed those plans. Slechta played in eight games as a true freshman. The most experienced member of the interior line is Steve Warren (above), a three-year letterman, who started six games as a junior.

wanted to I could probably play either side of the ball," Slechta said. "Right away I said defense."

And right away he became a defensive tackle, with plans of redshirting.

Slechta was among three freshman scholarship defensive tackles last season. The others were Jason Lohr from Tulsa, Okla., and Jon Clanton from Glendale, Ariz. All three were to get a good look during two-a-day practices, with the prospect of providing depth at a thin position.

Originally, the plan was that one would play and two would redshirt. And it quickly became apparent that the 6-foot-2, 275-pound Lohr would be the one to play because "Jason had so much size and strength over me and Clanton when we first started," Slechta said. "That gave him an advantage."

Slechta preferred to redshirt, anyway. And he figured that's what he would do.

The coaches "told me it could go either way," he said. "I wanted to redshirt because I thought it would benefit me the most. But whatever was best for the team. I said I would do whatever."

It appeared he would redshirt, even though he suited up for the season-opener against Louisiana Tech. The coaches "weren't going to play me," said Slechta. And they didn't.

The next week during practice, however, senior defensive tackle Jason Wiltz suffered an ankle injury, and "I had to play," Slechta said. "It was kind of something that had to be done."

"I was the next in line, I guess. If he hadn't gone down, I'd have another year to play."

He was told he would play in the second game against Alabama-Birmingham, which he did in the first half. "I remember I was standing there next to Lohr and everyone was sitting on the bench like they always do when the defense comes out," he said. "They were going over stuff."

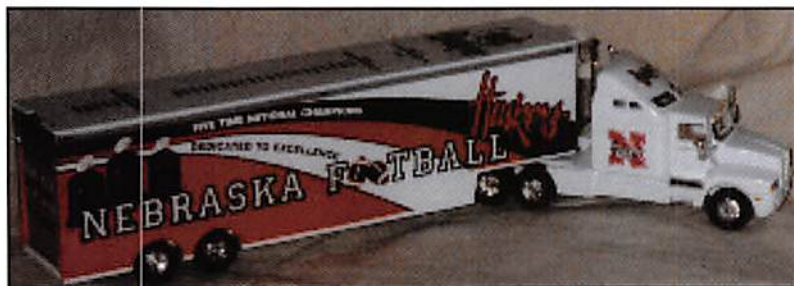
He and Lohr, who had played against Louisiana Tech, "were just listening in on everything and then Coach (McBride) goes: 'You two are up.' That's when it really hit me: 'Here it comes.'"

Slechta played in eight more games including the Holiday Bowl and finished the regular season with nine tackles, including three unassisted and three for losses totaling 11 yards.

Often he and Lohr were in games at the same time, with Lohr at nosetackle. As for most true freshmen, "how fast things happen," was the most difficult aspect of the transition from high school.

"In high school, it seemed like you had more time to react. Now things just happen so quickly."

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That's why you have to do everything so many times, get so many reps at everything because it's got to be second-nature. If you have to think about something, it's not going to work."

Slechta also had to learn to use his hands differently than he did as a rush end. "We did it a lot in high school, so it wasn't a big deal," he said.

"My rush end coach stressed that a lot, to get your hands on them and squeeze down. But he was pretty much happy if I got my hands on the guy.

"With Coach McBride, you've got to have your hands in the right spot on the jersey."

McBride stressed such fundamentals during spring practice, "stepping with the right foot, getting your hands up . . . hand placement, being in the right gap, all the little things," Slechta said.

During the spring, "I had a guy ask me: 'What do you weigh, about 240?' I thought, 'Two-forty?' That makes me think by the time I get out of here, I could easily weigh 300," he said.

Chances are, however, McBride would still refer to him as the "skinny kid."

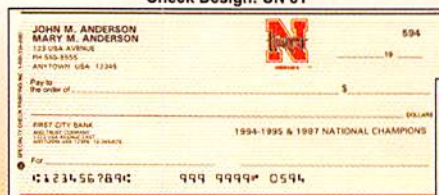
And his teammates would still call him "pence." ■

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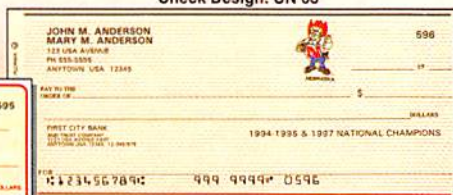
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RUSH END

Nebraska defensive coordinator Charlie McBride was talking with reporters in the hallway leading to the locker room beneath Memorial Stadium's south stands following a scrimmage in the spring. The subject was Kyle Vanden Bosch, who happened to walk by.

"He's doing good things, but he can really be a lot better," McBride was saying.

As Vanden Bosch passed, McBride looked up.

"He needs some plastic surgery on his face, though."

The words were loud enough that Vanden Bosch could have heard them. But the junior rush end continued on his way, seemingly oblivious to McBride's tongue-in-cheek insult.

McBride's words were evidence of his respect for Vanden Bosch, who could be the Cornhuskers' next great rush end, following in a tradition that includes recent All-Americans Grant Wistrom and Jared Tomich, to whom McBride compared him. "He's a lot like Tomich," said McBride.

"He might even have a little better speed. I don't know. They're both pretty good. They're both tough guys. Kyle is probably maybe even a little taller. But they've both got the same attitude."

"They don't play real happy, you know what I'm saying? They play with the attitude you've got to play this game with. If you want, just say he plays with an attitude, consistently."

McBride added with a laugh: "A bad attitude."

The 6-foot-4, 270-pound Vanden Bosch is bigger than most of those who have preceded him at rush end, which is a reflection of Nebraska's defensive philosophy and recruiting emphasis.

"A lot of teams look at those guys and they (rush ends) may be a little small for what they (other teams) want," McBride said. "Maybe they're looking for bigger guys. I don't know."

"The normal 4-3 defense will line up tighter on the ends. We line up a little wider."

The Cornhuskers have been willing to sacrifice size for speed at rush end. Redshirted freshman Demoiné Adams and sophomore J.P. Wichmann are good examples, according to McBride.

"They're probably standing out there at about 4.6 (in the 40), both of them," he said. "For defensive ends, 4.6 is . . . well, the last guy we had here maybe that fast was Jimmy Skow, who played a long time ago for me. Jimmy was about a 4.6 guy, and he played eight or 10 years in the NFL."

Skow, who earned All-America honors in 1985, was a tackle in a 5-2 base defense.

Adams and Wichmann, as well as redshirted freshmen Chris Kelsay and Justin Smith, are among those who competing for playing time as backups to Vanden Bosch and senior Aaron Wills.

All were highly regarded scholarship recruits. "Our defensive end position has always been kind of high-profile," said McBride. "I think that has something to do with a lot of the kids being interested because they know it's a position where they can make a name for themselves."

Vanden Bosch's interest also was based on Nebraska's strength and conditioning program. He was chosen the team's "Lifter of the Year" in the spring, after being a finalist for the award the previous year. Part of it was the weight room, and "part of it was the strength program in general," he said.

"You look at the players who come in here and when they leave. Nebraska is known for developing players to their full potential . . . I mean, just really bringing it out in players."

Vanden Bosch, who played as a true freshman on the 1997 national championship team, succeeds Mike Rucker on the right side, after backing up Chad Kelsay on the left, where Wills moves in.

Vanden Bosch was credited with 28 tackles, the most by any non-starter, including four for losses totaling 36 yards and two sacks. He had three quarterback hurries and forced two fumbles.

"When we saw 'Ruck' and Chad leave, we knew we'd have to step in and fill some big shoes," he said during the spring. "So we put in the work during the off-season. We're just trying to establish our spots and let people know that rush end is still solid, that we'll be ready to make the plays."

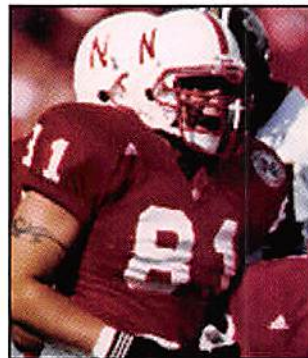
"People can have confidence in me and Aaron. We're going to be there giving it our all."

Having a rush end Vanden Bosch's size also is a big asset.

When he was a freshman, McBride regularly threatened to move him to defensive tackle because of his size. The threat, like the insult about plastic surgery, was good-natured, though Vanden Bosch wasn't always sure whether McBride was serious about such a position switch.

McBride was asked if he still made the threat.

"I might do that, come to think of it," he replied. "That's a good idea. I'll just tell him all the writers thought if we'd move him to tackle, he'd be a better lineman." ■



Aaron Wills was a valuable backup in 1998, playing in 11 games.

OUTLOOK

LEFT RUSH

Returning

Aaron Wills

Lost

Chad Kelsay

RIGHT RUSH

Returning

Kyle Vanden Bosch

Lost

Mike Rucker

Travis Toline

Kyle Vanden Bosch (left), putting the heat on Eric Crouch in the Spring Game, will succeed Mike Rucker as the starter at right rush end.



LINEBACKER

A tattoo on Carlos Polk's left shoulder includes the words "Feeling Lucky" and a red number 13 in the middle. Polk wears the same number on his Nebraska football jersey.

Middle linebackers don't often wear number 13 jerseys. In fact, many players, regardless of position, are superstitious enough to avoid a number 13 jersey. But Polk requested it.

"He says there is no bad luck," said equipment manager Glen Abbott.

Polk qualified that. "I feel it's going to be bad luck for the person looking at it instead of the person wearing it," he said. "I don't know. It might be unlucky for the offense."

Polk got the number 13 tattoo while attending Guilford High School in Rockford, Ill., where he was a USA Today All-American and one of the leading tacklers in Illinois prep history.

He was involved in 453 career tackles, including 30 for losses of 150 yards and 13 quarterback sacks. He also recovered 10 fumbles, intercepted five passes and blocked seven kicks.

He covered the field from sideline to sideline. But he didn't wear a number 13 jersey, mostly because the coaches wouldn't let him. "Our quarterback wore 13," said Polk.

"The jersey was too small for me, anyway."

As a result, he wore a number 44 jersey. When he arrived at Nebraska, however, senior middle linebacker Jon Hesse wore 44, and after Hesse completed his eligibility, Jay Foreman requested it. So Polk couldn't have had his high school number, even if he had wanted it. Which he didn't.

"I was like: 'I'm going to get my lucky 13,'" he said.

Polk, a junior, will be among three new starters on the defense, succeeding Foreman after two seasons as a backup and special teams player. Last season he also was the stand-up linebacker on the line of scrimmage in the "bubble" defense. "That's where I feel best, up on the line," he said.

"You don't have to worry about pass drop so much. I mean, I like to be a run-stopper. That's my attitude. I've always been the one who likes to be the aggressor. I've never liked to sit back."

Cornhusker fans already are familiar with Polk, and not just because of his number 13 jersey. He has been a high-visibility wedge-breaker on the kickoff team, playing with the enthusiasm and recklessness of the best in recent memory, among them Doug Welniak, Lance Gray and Billy Legate.

The 6-foot-3, 250-pound Polk lumbers (though that might suggest he's slow, which he is not) down the field in search of the ball carrier, shedding would-be blockers with his long arms. When he reaches the ball carrier, more often than not, the collision seems exceptionally violent.

"Somehow, it seems like when I do make a tackle, it's one of the big tackles," he said.

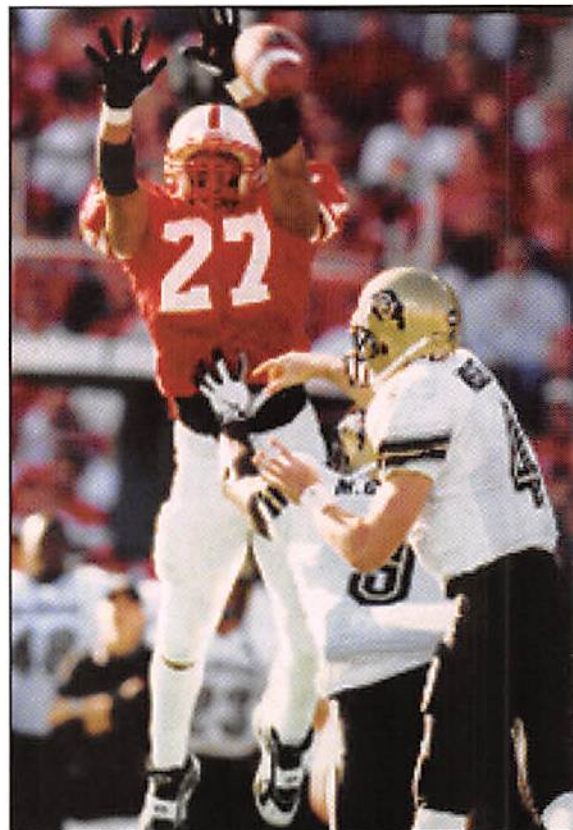
"It just happens. You don't really think about it. You see it (on videotape) the next day and you're like: 'Ooh, that was a big hit.' You almost don't know it until after the fact. I love kickoffs. You have no assignment, (except) just go down there and knock somebody's head off."

Middle linebacker is more restrictive, of course. But the most important quality for playing the position is having fun, according to Polk. "That's pretty much it," he said. "You've got to be kind of crazy to play in the middle. We don't get to do anything but just chase the ball around."

"That's one great thing here; you have those big defensive linemen like Steve Warren and Loran Kaiser keeping guys off you so you can make the plays. They're kind of like the silent heroes."

Polk could not be described as silent. Quite the contrary.

"I talk," he said. "That makes the game fun. I talk to the quarterback. I talk to the running back. 'Here we come.' I try to knock them off their game and hopefully hype up the defense a little."



As a junior, Eric Johnson started every game at weakside linebacker. He was Nebraska's fourth leading tackler with 70 and added six sacks.

OUTLOOK

STRONGSIDE

Returning

Tony Ortiz

Brian Shaw

Lost

Quint Hogrefe

MIDDLE

Returning

Carlos Polk

Ben Buettenback

Jamie Burrow

Lost

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Brian Shaw (left) and Tony Ortiz have split time at the strongside linebacker position for the last two seasons. They are expected to again share the starting spot as seniors. Ortiz had 46 tackles last season, and Shaw added 39.

"It helps everybody relax and just have fun. I had a couple of guys at Texas A&M who got a little mad and tried to do a couple of cheapshots at me. But that's part of the game."

He readily admits to being among the Cornhuskers' most prolific trash talkers. "I'm kind of loud when I talk," he said. "I've got to have fun or there's no use going out there. But there are some guys on offense who talk, too. Don't let them fool you. They talk a lot over on that side of the ball."

A tattoo on Polk's right shoulder says "Polkdaddy" and a barbed wire tattoo surrounds his arm. As with the "Feeling Lucky" number 13 tattoo, Polk got the "Polkdaddy" tattoo while he was in high school. He added the barbed wire after he arrived at Nebraska as a freshman.

"It was kind of painful," he said with a laugh. "I was like: 'I don't remember this kind of pain.'"

It's nothing compared to the pain ball carriers unlucky enough to encounter him must endure, however. His aggressive play belies his personality. He has a ready smile and laughs constantly.

He might best be described as upbeat. "That's what people tell me; I don't know," Polk said. "Attitudes change when you strap the helmets on. But off the field, you know, I'm a nice guy." ■

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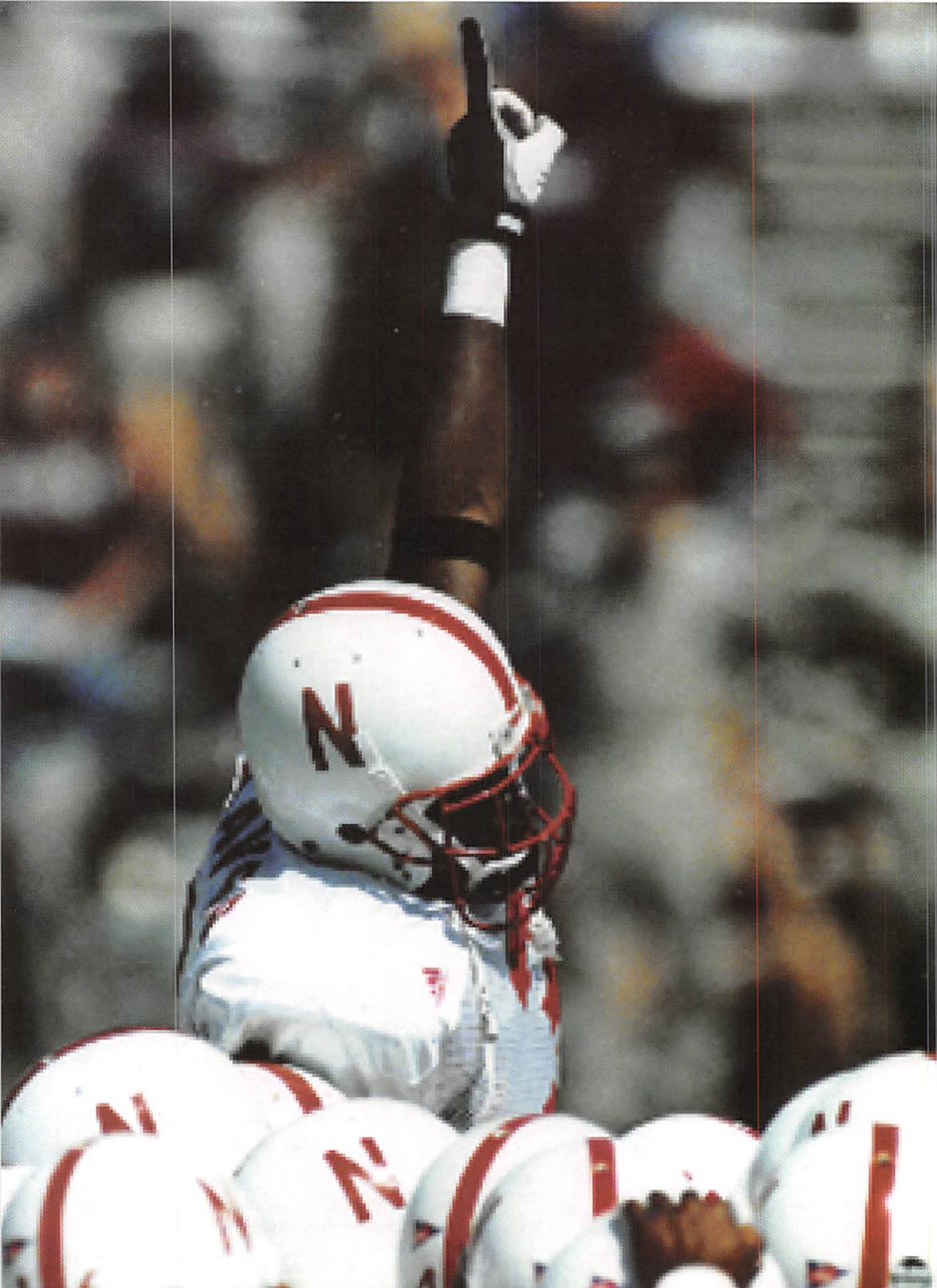
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SECONDARY

Cornerback, "nickel" back, punt coverage, punt return . . . Keyuo Craver might grow weary just recounting the list of his responsibilities on the Nebraska football team, much less fulfilling them. And he could do more. "Probably if you had to, you could use him on the offensive side of the ball," Coach Frank Solich said. "He's got that kind of ability."

Actually, Craver thought he would be playing offense when he was recruited by the Cornhuskers following an extraordinary high school career in the small, east Texas community of Harleton.

His offensive numbers were incredible. As a senior, he rushed for 3,024 yards, averaging 11.2 yards per carry, and 50 touchdowns, totals that ranked second all-time nationally.

He was only slightly less remarkable as a junior, rushing for 2,329 yards and 36 touchdowns.

A reasonable assumption was, he would play offense at Nebraska, though wingback, probably, rather than running back. The Cornhusker coaches had something else in mind for him, however. "I came in a scrawny little offensive kid that they inserted on defense," Craver said with a laugh.

Not only was he inserted on defense, he worked his way into the regular rotation at cornerback, earning a Blackshirt after the Kansas State game. Against the No. 1- and No. 2-ranked Wildcats, he was involved in six tackles and intercepted a Michael Bishop pass, as well as breaking up two others.

Earning the coveted Blackshirt representative of the first-team defense required becoming less critical of himself. "At first, I always came down on myself real hard," said Craver.

"My main block was myself. Ralph Brown told me: 'You can't come down on yourself so hard. You've just got to go out there and instead of worrying about that play (mistake), make up for it.'"

With each passing (no pun intended) week, Craver became more comfortable, and confident. By season's end, he was beginning to fully realize the wisdom of Brown's advice.

"Won't anybody beat me deep, and if they do, it won't happen again," Craver said. "It's all mental; 99 percent of the time it's a mental thing. You wouldn't be out there if you weren't athletic."

"It took a long time because, like I said, I always came down on myself. I still do now. I'm just a competitor. I hate to lose. I hate to see people out-do me. That's one of the main reasons they threw me in the fire. They saw I had the heart to go out there and try to compete, no matter who it is."

Beyond his competitiveness and mindset, however, it was Craver's athleticism that enabled him to play as a true freshman — one of only three who did so for the Cornhuskers last season.

The others were defensive tackles Jason Lohr and Jeremy Slechta.

Craver showed his athleticism on his high school track and field team. He was a three-time state champion in the triple jump, setting a state meet record with a leap of 50 feet, 4 inches as a senior. He also finished third in the Class 2A 200 meters as a senior, finishing in 22.04 seconds.

The Cornhusker track and field coaches "recruited me first," he said.

Cornerback Keyuo Craver, one of three true freshmen to play in 1998, is at the top of the heap during a pregame huddle.

OUTLOOK

LEFT CORNER

Returning

Erwin Swiney
Keyuo Craver

FREE SAFETY

Returning

Clint Finley
Greg McGraw
Dion Booker

ROVER

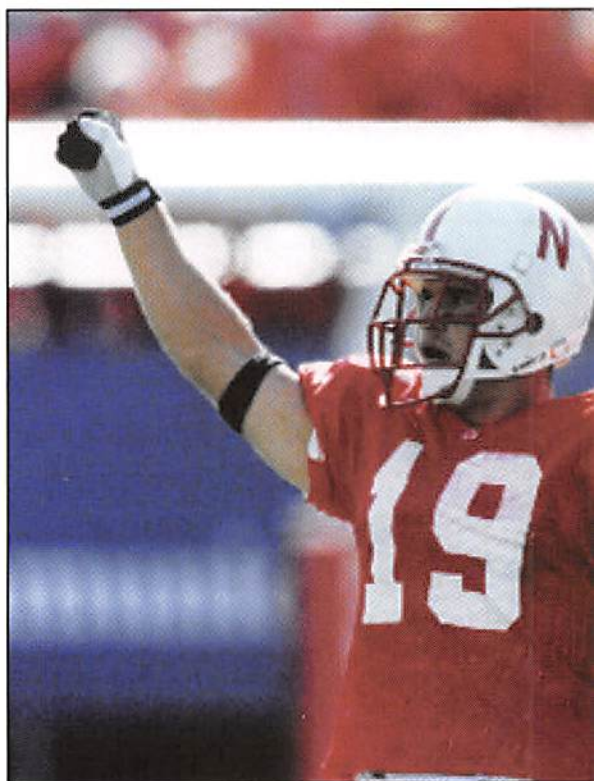
Returning

Mike Brown
Joe Walker
Troy Watchhorn
Gregg List
Brandon Quindt
Wes Woodward

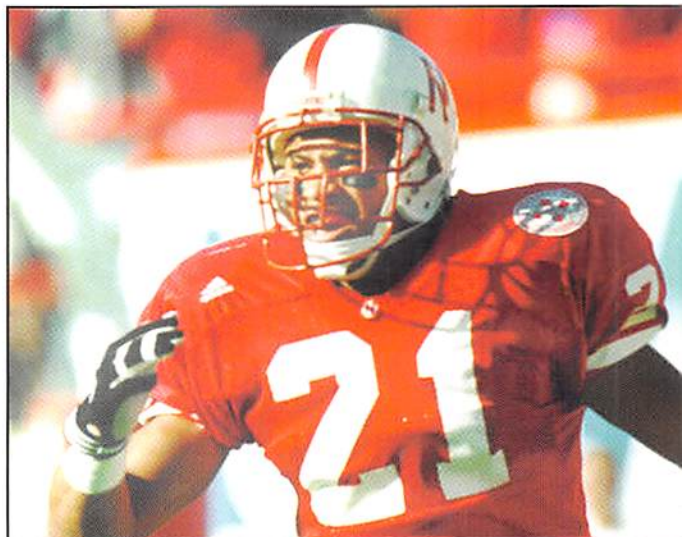
RIGHT CORNER

Returning

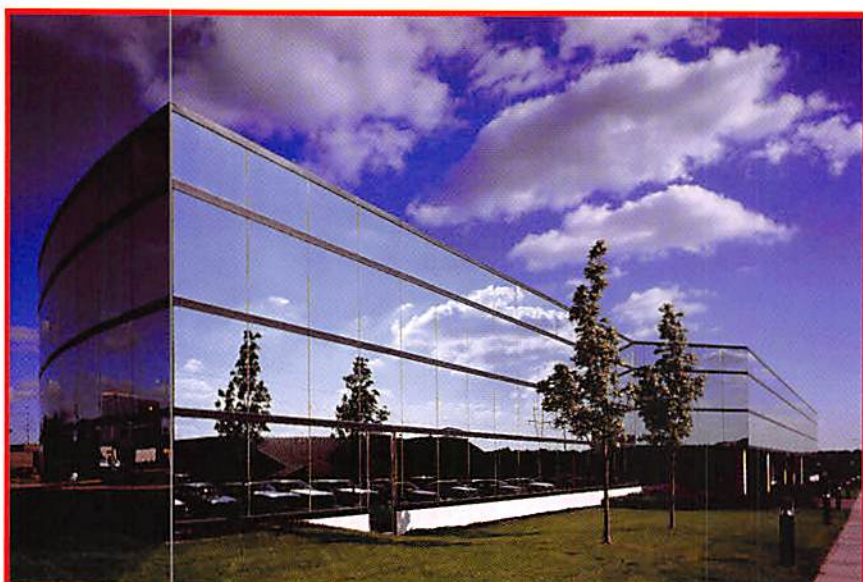
Ralph Brown
Jeff Hemje
Josh Anderson



Free safety Clint Finley, after missing the first three games because of a knee strain, had three interceptions to tie Joe Walker for the team lead. Finley returned one of the interceptions 42 yards for a touchdown against Colorado.



Rover Mike Brown led the team in tackles with 102, breaking the secondary record of 87 set by Steve Carmer in 1991.



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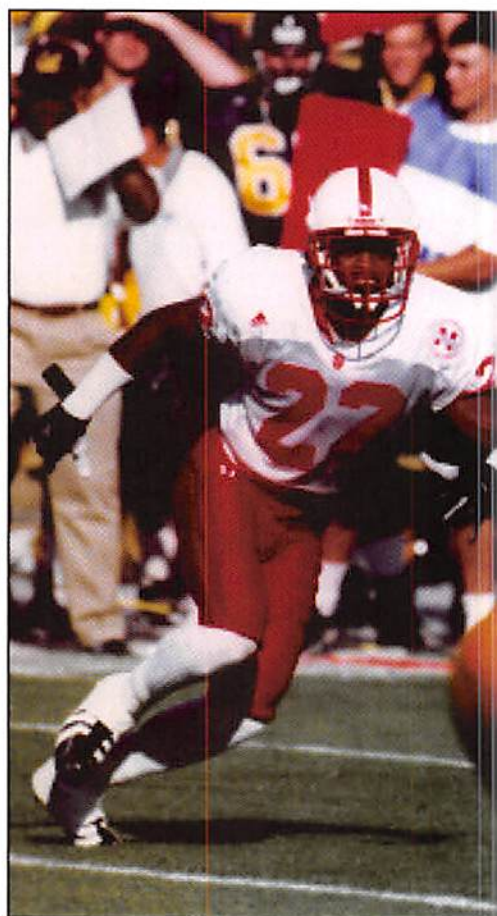
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They sent a questionnaire, which included a section about other sports, and shared the results of the questionnaire with the football coaches, who "saw my numbers in football so they wanted film," said Craver. "When they saw the film, Coach (Turner) Gill wanted to come see me play."

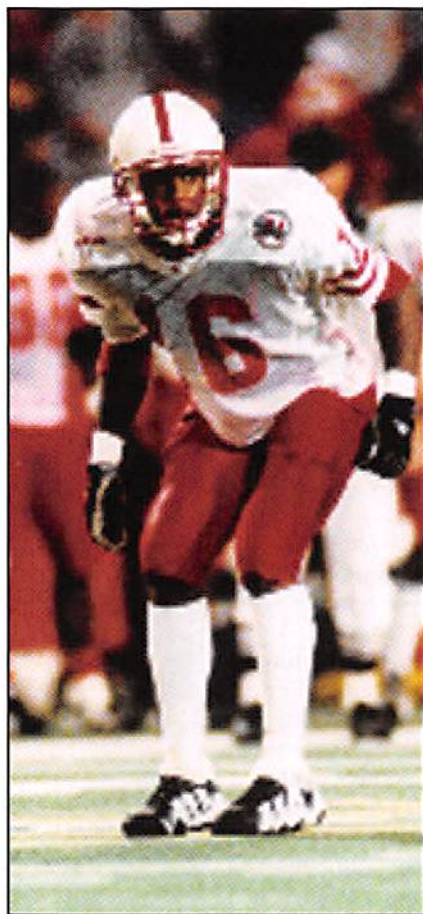
When Gill saw him play, "I made a believer out of him," Craver said.

Craver has continued to triple jump at Nebraska. He finished seventh at the Big 12 Indoor Championships. It's the least he can do. If not for the track coaches, the football coaches "probably wouldn't even have called me," he said. "But the good Lord had a plan."

"I know if it wasn't for Him, I wouldn't be out here. I'm just kind of blessed. I pray a lot because I feel like I'm not doing this by myself. I've got the Lord behind me. And I give Him all the glory."

Craver also has praise for his teammates in an experienced secondary.

"I feel that Mike Brown is the greatest underrated player in the nation. He's one of the greatest



Cornerback Erwin Swiney had 13 pass breakups to tie Barron Miles (1994) for second on Nebraska's all-time list.

safeties in the nation, very underrated," said Craver. "And everybody knows Ralph Brown is a great player. I've just got a lot of respect for them because they're down-to-earth; they help you out.

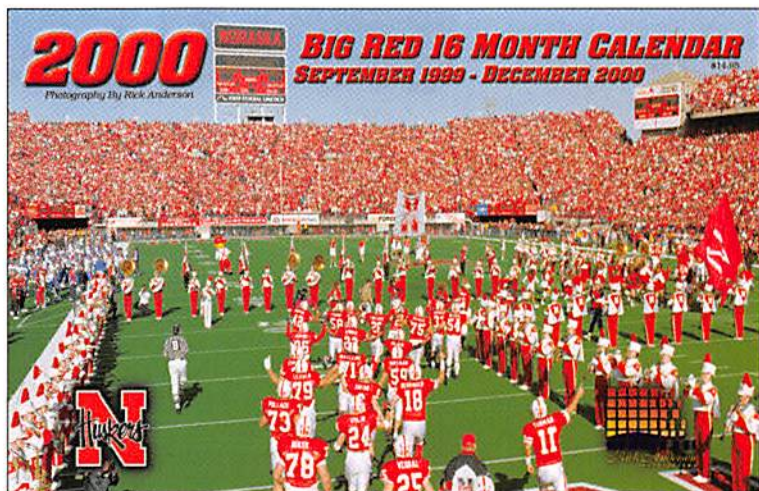
"Whenever they have a chance to help me out, they do."

The same is true of Joe Walker and Erwin Swiney, he said.

Craver stayed with Walker, also a Texan, in Lincoln last summer. The friendship that developed no doubt influences his assessment of Walker, but "he's going to be the player of the 90s," Craver said. "He's going to be the man. I just realized he's probably the greatest athlete on the team."

Craver also would be in the running for that. He and Walker, who tied an NCAA record by returning a punt, kickoff and interception for touchdowns last season, both will be busy this fall.

It can be wearisome. "But you can't think about it like that," said Craver. "Guys are depending on me to go out there and contribute. So I'm just going to do whatever it takes." ■



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SPECIAL TEAMS

Josh Brown sent the kickoff into the end zone after making a 34-yard field goal early in the second quarter of the spring game. The ball was fielded by Michael Demps.

"Who runs it out 10 yards deep in the end zone?" Brown asked, rhetorically.

The answer was Demps, who was about 7 or 8 yards deep when he began what was officially a 100-yard return for a touchdown. A surprised Brown was knocked down by a blocker as he "turned out." He quickly got to his feet, however, and joined in the pursuit of Demps along the east sideline.

He almost caught Demps from behind. "I told him if I had 10 more yards, I would have got him," said Brown, who ran the 40-yard dash in 4.63 seconds during post-winter conditioning testing.

Demps was impressed. "He's really fast for a kicker," he said.

He's really fast, period. "I ran 4.4s all the time in high school," said Brown.

The redshirted freshman from Foyil, Okla., also was a two-time state high jump champion, with a personal best of 6 feet, 8 inches. And he ran the 100 meters in 10.74 seconds.

He earned four letters in track and field and three in basketball. But it was as a football player on an eight-man team that attracted the Cornhuskers' attention. He was a running back on offense and a safety on defense. He returned punts and kickoffs. And he punted and kicked field goals.

"I never came off the field in high school," Brown said.

That made his first season at Nebraska difficult. As a redshirt, "I wasn't doing anything," he said. "I hated it. I couldn't sleep on Friday nights because of the games, even though I wasn't playing."

He still won't be as involved as he would like to be this season, even though he has shed the redshirt. He was recruited as a kicker, and kickers often feel as if they're on the periphery.

Brown struggled with that during spring practice. "I couldn't get myself to say, 'This is your job,'" he said. "It makes you feel useless, like you're not as much a part of the team."

That might be the perception, but the reality is quite different. The kicking game is as important as offense and defense. Consider the contributions of Kris Brown and Bill Lafleur.

Kris Brown broke most of the school place-kicking records and established an NCAA record for career extra-point kicks. Lafleur averaged a school-record 44.9 yards per punt last season.

Josh Brown and senior walkon Dan Hadenfeldt are the top candidates to replace them. One might emerge in the fall as the No. 1 place-kicker and punter. Or they might split the duties.

"There's no need to make a quick decision," Coach Frank Solich said near the end of spring practice. "Certainly we've got a couple of guys, two or three, at both spots who have shown well."

"So it will be interesting to see how that all plays out."

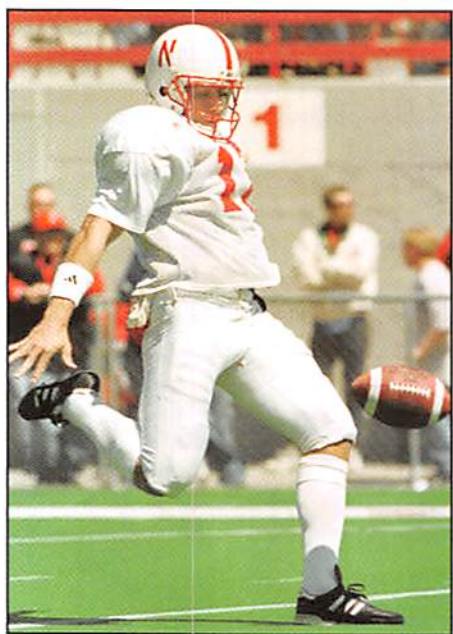
Brown's preference is place-kicking. "I've never been a very confident punter," he said. "And Dan is so good at it. I've never seen myself as a punter here. There are people who are better."

Even so, he held his own in the spring. In two major scrimmages and the Red-White game, he averaged 46.5 yards per punt on 13 punts while Hadenfeldt averaged 48.9 yards on 10 punts. Brown made 4-of-5 field goals, missing only a 50-yarder in the Red-White game. Hadenfeldt made 2-of-5.

The kickers averaged 60 to 80 field goal attempts from various distances and 100 punts each practice during the spring. "My legs have been killing me," Brown said following the Red-White game. His left foot, which he plants on place kicks, ached so much some days that he had to ice it.

Prior spring practice, Brown used a soccer ball in Cook Pavilion to improve his place-kicking, after what he considered a disappointing fall. "I drove the ball in the fall. I wasn't hitting it well," he said. "So I got a soccer ball out, went back

Redshirt freshman Josh Brown made 4-of-5 field goals during the spring. His only miss was a 50-yarder in the Red-White game.



Dan Hadenfeldt averaged 48.9 yards per punt in the spring on 10 punts during two major scrimmages and the Red-White game.

OUTLOOK

PLACE-KICKER

Returning

Dan Hadenfeldt

Lost

Kris Brown

PUNTER

Returning

Dan Hadenfeldt

Lost

Bill Lafleur

Brian Morro

KICK-OFF

RETURNER

Returning

Shevin Wiggins

Joe Walker

Lost

Kenny Cheatham

PUNT

RETURNER

Returning

Shevin Wiggins

Joe Walker

Ralph Brown

Keyuo Craver

Lost

Kenny Cheatham

HOLDER

Returning

Eric Crouch

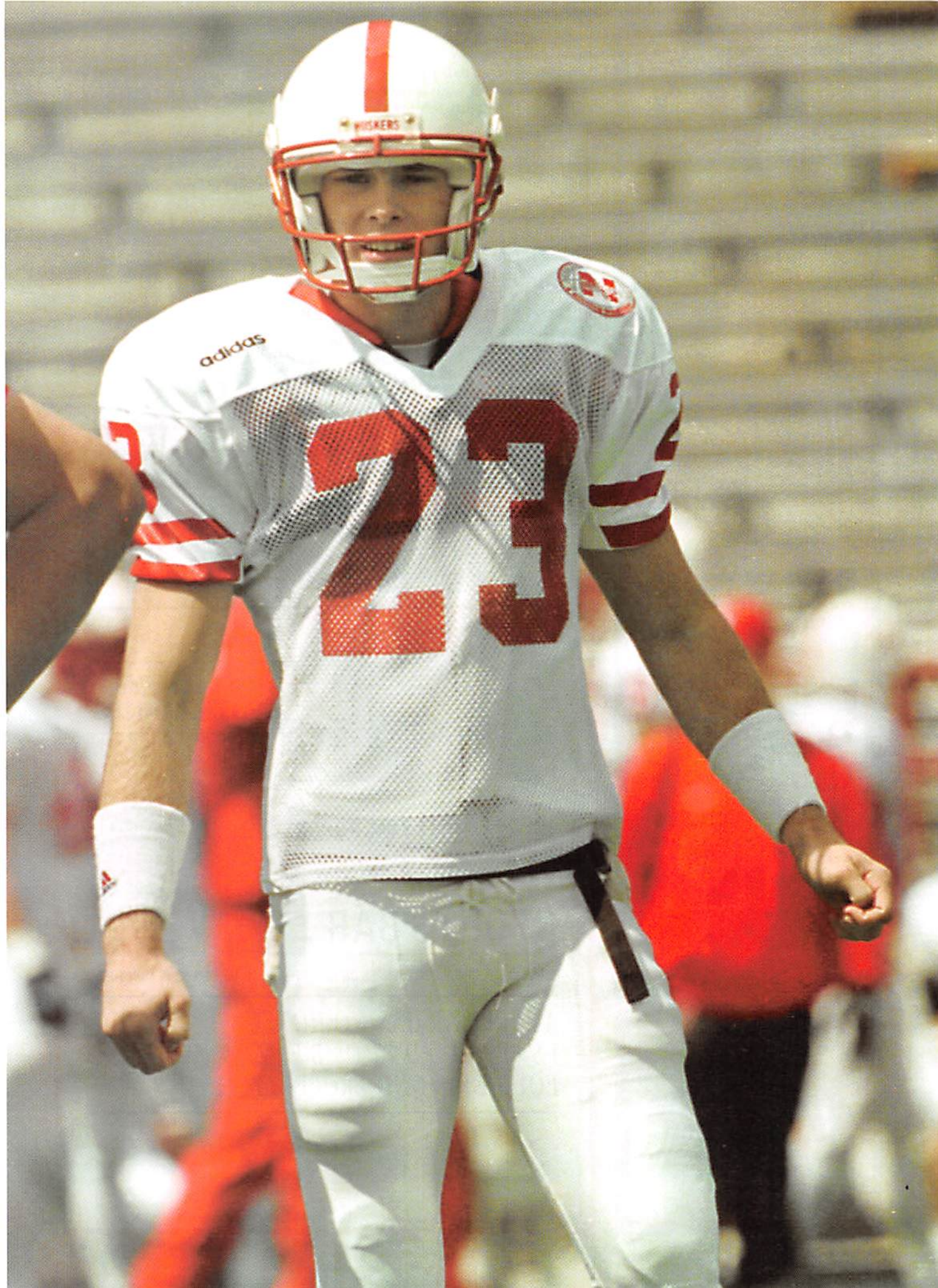
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Returning

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to my roots. The way I looked at it, if I can get a soccer ball rotating backward, I can do it with a football. A soccer ball is a lot harder to kick straight."

By the time spring practice began, Brown had regained the confidence that enabled him to kick a 61-yard field goal in the Oklahoma high school playoffs in 1996. He's confident from at least 55 yards, "easy," he said, although "I don't think they'll ever let me go that far in a game."

The school record, shared by Paul Rogers, Billy Todd and Chris Drennan, is 55 yards.

None of those three played a position, of course. The game has become too specialized. In fact, Nebraska

hasn't had a place-kicker who regularly played a position in more than 30 years. Larry Wachholtz was an all-conference safety as well as the No. 1 place-kicker in 1965 and 1966.

Brown, however, "has the ability to play a couple of positions, maybe two or three, and it's not completely out of the question," Solich said. "Josh is a tremendous athlete."

He could play safety or wide receiver, "but they (the coaches) won't allow it right now," said Brown. "As long as I get to kick, I'd do it in a heartbeat, anything they'd let me do, offense or defense."

He'll become a defender after he kicks, and probably a good one. Ask Demps. ■

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Ready to Play

Defensive backs get early playing time to give Nebraska the depth it needs in secondary

By Todd Henrichs

Mike Brown remembers being schooled by opponents when playing as a freshman at Nebraska. Now a senior, Brown has grown into the role of teacher.

Brown had plenty of opportunities to help teach Nebraska's young corps of defensive backs last spring. A two-year starter at rover, Brown and senior teammate Ralph Brown (no relation) helped tutor the likes of sophomore-to-be Keyuo Craver and redshirt freshmen Mike Demps and DeJuan Groce.

"When I was a freshman, I made a lot of mistakes but all the older guys told me not to worry about it," Mike Brown said. "I just try to tell them the same thing and that it's important to just relax."

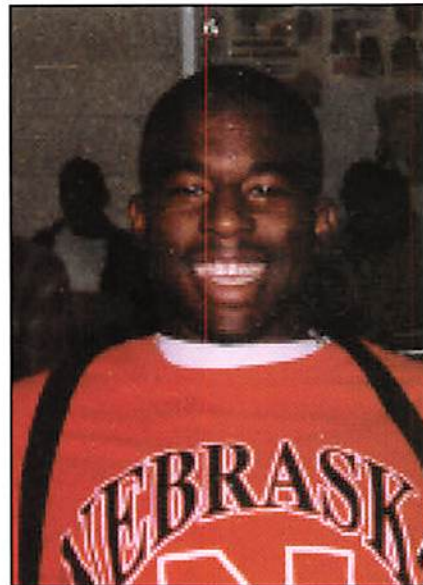
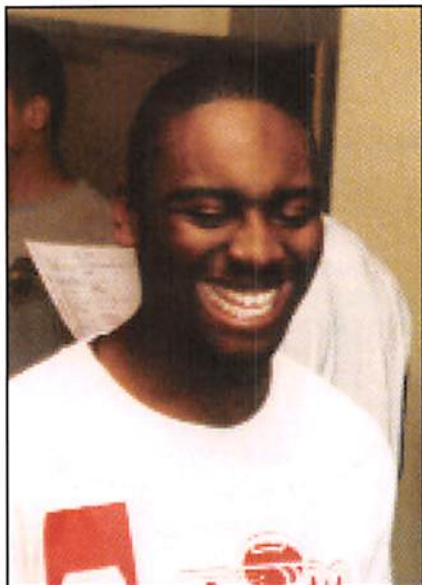
"There's nothing about their ability that's going to slow them down. It's just getting the defenses down and things like that."

Once they've mastered the schemes, NU's influx of young defensive backs should give the Huskers depth and versatility never before seen at the position by veteran assistant coach George Darlington. If Joe Walker and Erwin Swiney successfully return from injuries, Nebraska will have five players who started a minimum of seven games last season in addition to the youngsters waiting in the wings.

"There's no question we have more flexibility, and hopefully we will play more people," Darlington said after the team had wrapped up spring drills. "We have some options as to who plays where."

"Certainly to have veterans is a big part of it, but you have to bring along young players. The nice thing is we're going to have real good competition, which will really be helpful to us."

Competition has been scarce in the defensive backfield in recent years, and Ralph Brown might be part of the reason. The senior from Hacienda



DeJuan Groce (left) and Mike Demps hope to earn playing time as redshirt freshmen. Ralph Brown (left) and Mike Brown, going for the football at right, both made significant contributions as true freshmen in 1996.

Heights, Calif., became the first Husker position player since World War II to start his first game as a true freshman and has started every game at right cornerback since. He is a Jim Thorpe Award Candidate after winning third-team All-American honors last season.

Mike Brown has played in all but one game since coming to NU from Scottsdale, Ariz. He led the Huskers with 102 tackles last season, the most since Rob Stuckey had 125 for NU in 1983.

Craver, a contender for Swiney's spot on the left corner, said his progress is a direct result of help from his veteran teammates. The Texas native played in every game last season and earned his Blackshirt with a career-best performance in the Huskers' loss at Kansas State.

"Whenever they are able to give us a helping hand, we are always ready to listen," said Craver, who picked off

a pass from K-State quarterback Michael Bishop. "They have been through everything that we will go through. That can't do anything but help us."

Craver wrapped up spring drills with an interception in the Red-White scrimmage. So did Swiney, the Lincoln Northeast product who was bothered all spring by a groin injury.

Demps and Groce, roommates at NU, redshirted last season after injuries cropped up in the fall.

Demps was still bothered by knee problems but ignited the Red with a 100-yard kickoff return in the Spring Game. Demps moved to rover in the offseason, even while limited by his injury.

"It's pretty evident when you watch him in practice and see him limp all the time," Darlington said. "There is going to be an intense effort to strengthen his bad leg as much as they can to see if we can get him back





to where he can run like he did in high school."

Demps was electronically timed in 4.38 seconds over 40 yards and 10.31 over 100 meters at his Fort Worth, Texas, high school. At NU, he has yet to run faster than 4.6 seconds. Demps is playing without the lateral meniscus in his left knee, which doctors removed after a high school injury.

Groce came to Nebraska from Garfield Heights, Ohio, as a Parade All-American. Most thought he could have played as a true freshman but for an injury to his Achilles' tendon about a month into the season. He worked

last spring at the cornerback spots.

Swiney was expected to undergo offseason surgery, jeopardizing the starting spot he held for every game last season. Another junior, Walker is expected to return full speed in the fall after his surgery to repair cartilage torn in his knee last December.

Walker, one of many NU players with Texas ties, is another example of Nebraska's versatility in the defensive backfield. He started the first six games at rover a year ago while Mike Brown was filling in for injured Clint Finley at free safety. As a returner, he became just the sixth player to return

a kickoff, punt and interception for touchdowns in the same season.

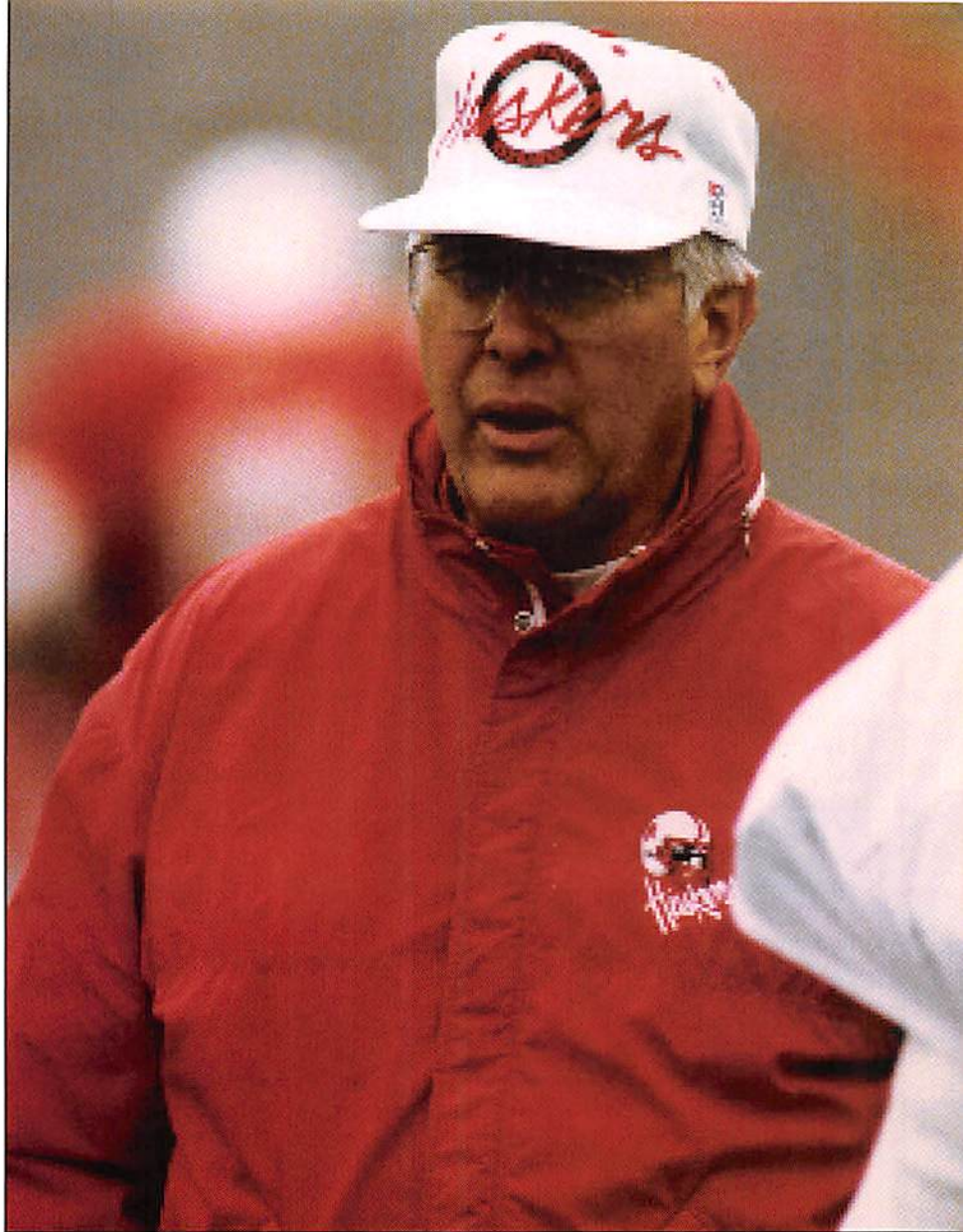
Finley, a junior from Cuero, Texas, intercepted three passes in just nine games a year ago. Back-up free safety Greg McGraw returned a fumble 94 yards for a touchdown in the Spring Game.

With the rash of injuries within the Nebraska program over the past season, Darlington said it's important to gain confidence in as many players as possible. Their ability to play multiple positions is an added bonus.

"When you have players that can't make the adjustment, it really does



Scott Bruhn



Keyuo Craver (3) played in every game and had one interception as a true freshman. He also had an interception in the Spring Game (left). Secondary coach George Darlington (above) enjoys having depth to work with. "Certainly to have veterans is a big part of it, but you have to bring along young players," he said. "The nice thing is we're going to have real good competition, which will really be helpful to us."

limit you," Darlington said. "It's nice to stand here and say I'm really not sure where everybody is going to fit. We might play some people in positions different than what you've seen in the spring."

In their 9-4 season a year ago, the Huskers ranked in the bottom half of the Big 12 in both pass defense and total defense. Not counting the bowl game, opponents had 25 pass plays of 25 or more yards.

Although not concerned with last year's numbers, Darlington hopes opponents will have to deal with a more athletic defensive secondary with

game-breaking capabilities this season. And if players like the Browns have their way, the younger players stepping in will be smarter as well.

"You can see them kind of in the background talking to the younger players," Darlington said. "And what's nice is the younger kids really look up to them."

"Keyuo is a very, very fine competitor, and he's really an amazing athlete for a freshman. Demps, if he can get healthy and strengthen his leg, will also have a chance to really be an impact player."

Nebraska head coach Frank Solich

is counting on more from both sides of the football in his second season. A dominant defense, however, has been the root of past NU championship teams.

Solich said he's comfortable with the talent stocked in the secondary this season and with the chance to improve significantly this fall.

"That should really be a very, very strong part of what we get done defensively," Solich said. "That's certainly one area that it pays to have experienced and very talented athletes."

"I think that we've got our fair share." ■

Will They Play Right Away?

*Whether true freshmen play
depends on opportunity as much as ability*

Three? How about four? Or maybe five?

"Well, we'll see," Coach Frank Solich said, responding on letter-of-intent signing day to a question regarding how many of Nebraska's recruits might contribute as true freshmen.

"I do know this: over the last few years we've had four or five players who have been able to come in and contribute right away. I would like to think this would be one of those classes.

"But it really comes down to a lot of factors, so we'll see how that all plays out."

The last five seasons the Cornhuskers have played an average of four true freshmen, with a high of six in 1997, and never fewer than three, in 1998, 1995 and 1994, when walk-on quarterback Monte Christo's redshirt was pulled because of injuries to Tommie Frazier and Brook Berringer.

Christo, who made a brief appearance in one game, sat out a medical redshirt in 1995.

Outside linebacker Grant Wistrom and defensive back Octavious McFarlin were the only other true freshmen to play in 1994. Defensive back Michael Booker played as a first-year sophomore.

Wistrom played in every game, finishing with 36 tackles, including 4.5 sacks.

Whether a true freshman plays or watches depends as much on opportunity as ability. Last season cornerback Keyuo Craver and defensive tackle Jason Lohr would have been the only true freshmen to play if Jason Wiltz, also a defensive tackle, hadn't suffered a severe ankle sprain.

Freshman Jeremy Slechta shed a redshirt because Wiltz was sidelined for two games.

All three made significant contributions, with Craver earning a Blackshirt late in the season.

Other true freshmen, including rush end Chris Kelsay and defensive back DeJuan Groce, might have been forced into backup duty last season had there been injuries at their positions.

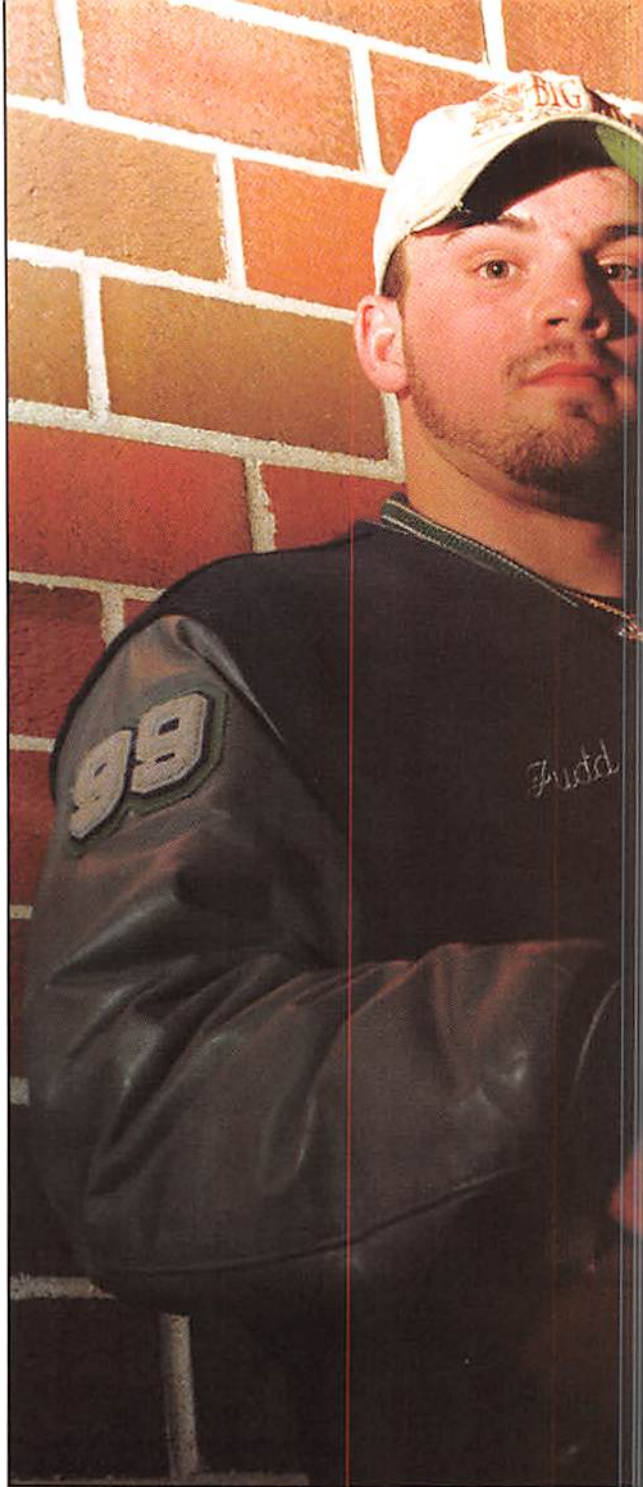
Both suited up for early games before settling in as redshirts. They and several others from their recruiting class are being counted on to make significant contributions this fall. One of the few who won't is Shawn McGann, a wingback from Granger, Ind., who left the program in the spring.

Considering the Cornhuskers' experience and depth on defense, there would seem to be more opportunity on offense this season, though true freshmen rarely play in the offensive line, and five of Nebraska's 21 freshmen scholarship recruits are listed as offensive linemen.

Lack of depth at fullback, however, might enable Judd Davies to play. "He might have a shot right away," Solich said prior to spring practice. "He's going to be given an opportunity to get on the field. He's really bright, an excellent student, great work ethic, a tough, physical player."

"He's really shown that he's got what you look for at the fullback spot."

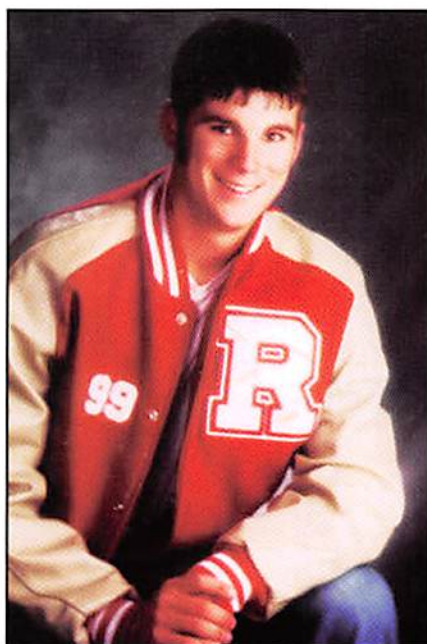
Davies, who rushed for more than 1,500 yards and 23 touchdowns last season at Omaha's Millard North High



School, attended Nebraska's Big Red Football Camp for three summers. He was among the first to make an oral commitment to the Cornhuskers, announcing his intention in early July.

"We've known a ton about Judd," Solich said during a news conference on letter-of-intent signing day in early February. "And you know we're in need of bringing young players into our system at the fullback position, (after) losing two of the three top fullbacks this past year."

With the departure of Joel Makovicka and Billy Legate, junior Willie Miller and senior Ben Kingston,



Nebraska's lack of numbers at fullback give Judd Davies (left) a good opportunity to play. Shaun Coleman (above left) is recovering from an injury and won't enroll until January. Patrick Kabongo (right), the largest of the recruits, has played just three years of organized football and might need time to develop.

True freshmen who have played the last five seasons

1998

Keyuo Craver, defensive back
Jason Lohr, defensive tackle
Jeremy Slechta, defensive tackle

1997

Correll Buckhalter, I-back
Matt Davison, split end
Bobby Newcombe, QB/wingback
Erwin Swiney, defensive back
Kyle Vanden Bosch, rush end
Joe Walker, defensive back

1996

Mike Brown, defensive back

Ralph Brown, defensive back
*J.R. Edwards, split end
DeAngelo Evans, I-back
Steve Warren, defensive tackle

1995

Kris Brown, place-kicker
Ahman Green, I-back
Chad Kelsay, rush end

1994

Monte Christo, quarterback
Octavious McFarlin, defensive back
Grant Wistrom, outside linebacker
*subsequently transferred

1999 recruiting class

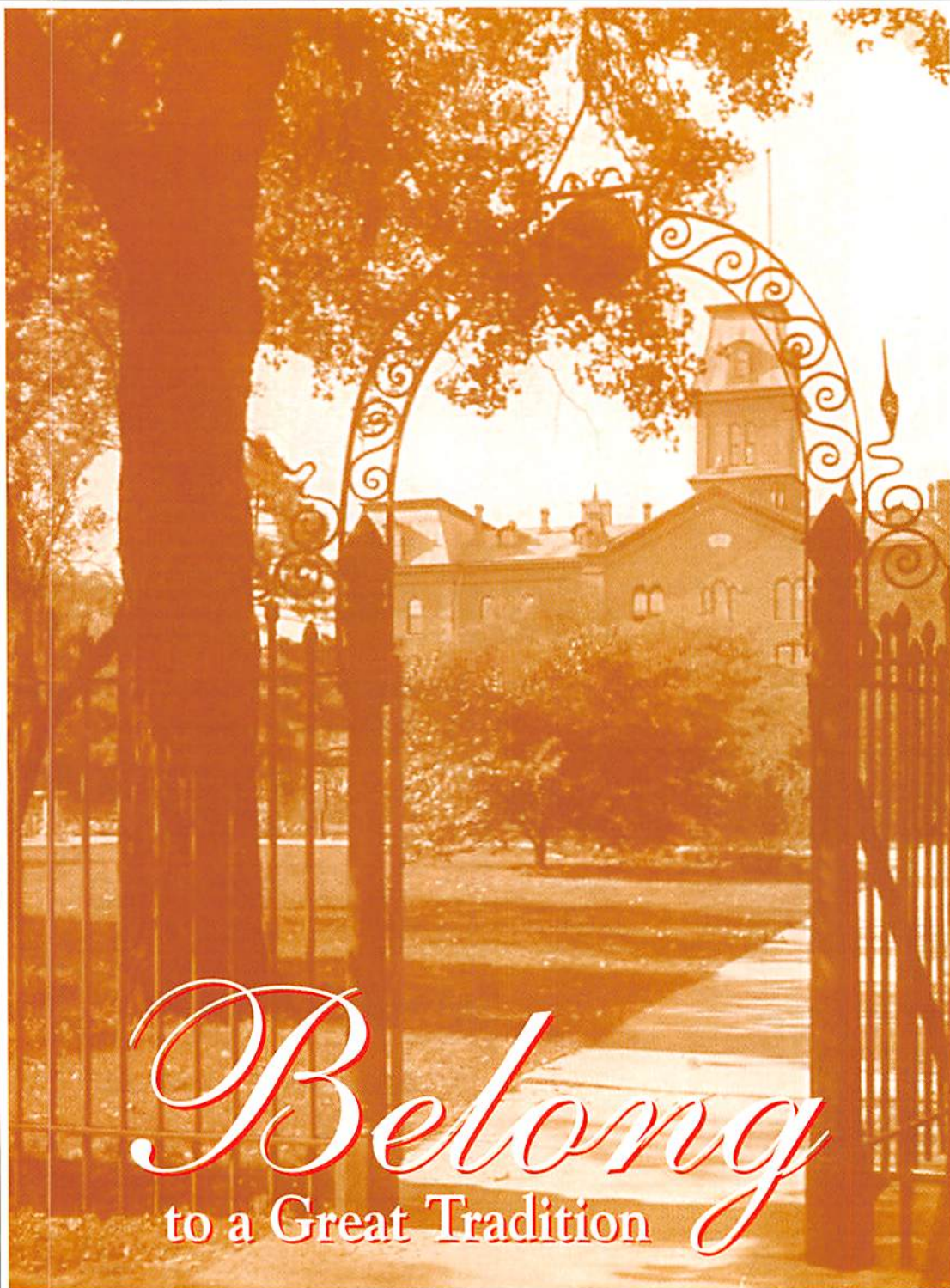
Ryon Bingham, defensive lineman, 6-3, 270, Sandy (Alta), Utah
Rob Blomeier, defensive back, 5-11, 185, Lititz (Manheim Township), Pa.
Shaun Coleman, linebacker, 6-4, 210, Littleton (Regis Jesuit), Co.
Carl Crawford, quarterback, 6-2, 205, Houston (Jefferson Davis), Texas
Judd Davies, fullback, 6-1, 235, Omaha (Millard North), Neb.
Josh Davis, I-back, 5-11, 190, Loveland, Co.
Jon Dawson, offensive lineman, 6-3, 285, Cheyenne (Central) Wyo.
Toniu Fonoti, offensive lineman, 6-4, 300, Hauula (Kahuku), Hawaii
John Garrison, rush end/defensive lineman, 6-5, 265, Blue Springs, Mo.
Taylor Gehman, defensive back, 5-11, 190, Omaha (Northwest), Neb.
Tim Green, offensive lineman, 6-5, 305, Omaha (Westside), Neb.
*Larry Henderson, wide receiver, 6-1, 190, West Los Angeles College, Calif.
Blanchard Johnson III, linebacker, 6-0, 200, Omaha (Council Bluffs St. Albert), Neb.
Trevor Johnson, tight end, 6-5, 225, Lincoln (Northeast), Neb.
Patrick Kabongo, rush end, 6-6, 315, Montreal (Vanier College Prep), Canada
Chris Loos, offensive lineman, 6-3, 300, Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.
Jammal Lord, quarterback, 6-3, 195, Bayonne, N.J.
Robin Miller, I-back, 5-11, 220, Kent (Meridian), Wash.
Spencer Owen, rush end, 6-5, 235, Carrollton, Mo.
Phil Peetz, defensive lineman, 6-2, 245, Elkhorn, Neb.
Tamotu Tagoa'i, defensive lineman, 6-3, 290, Hauula (St. Louis), Hawaii
Daniel Waldrop, offensive lineman, 6-5, 320, Wilmington (Banning), Calif.
*enrolled for spring semester

who originally walked on, are the Cornhuskers' only scholarship fullbacks.

Shaun Coleman, a linebacker from Littleton, Colo., definitely won't play in the fall. He won't enroll until January, after recovering from an arm injury. And, as indicated earlier, the five offensive linemen almost certainly will redshirt. The other freshmen should get a good look, however.

"It's a good class, regardless of how many of them play their first year," said Solich.

"But some of them do have a chance." ■



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1999 PLAYER BIOS

The hits just keep on coming, at least that's the way it might seem to second-year Nebraska Coach **Frank Solich**.

A number of key players missed all or most of spring practice recovering from injuries, including quarterback **Bobby Newcombe**, I-backs **DeAngelo Evans** and **Dan Alexander**, fullback **Willie Miller**, tackle **Adam Julch**, linebacker **Eric Johnson** and defensive back/kick returner **Joe Walker**. All were expected to return in the fall.

In late May, Solich got the news that Walker would require more surgery to repair a joint surface defect, discovered during his progressive running program. Walker, who underwent ACL and meniscal surgery on his left knee in January, had arthroscopic surgery May 25 and was expected to miss at least four months. He could use a redshirt year if the injury is not fully healed.

Walker, who started six games, was one of 10 players with starting experience returning on defense at eight positions. Gone are starting rush ends **Mike Rucker** and **Chad Kelsay** and middle linebacker **Jay Foreman**.

Offensively, nine players with starting experience return at seven positions. That includes Newcombe, who is expected to challenge **Eric Crouch** for the starting quarterback spot.

Evans, who played in only three games while battling nagging injuries, will attempt to rekindle the fire he displayed as a freshman in 1996. Key losses on offense included fullback **Joel Makovicka**, center **Josh Heskew** and tight end **Sheldon Jackson**.

Nebraska will still have a Brown in the kicking game, but this year it will be redshirt freshman **Josh Brown**, who is competing with senior **Dan Hadenfeldt** to replace four-year kicker **Kris Brown** and punter **Bill Lafleur**.

The kickers are just two of the many new faces in 1999. How they perform and the health of those recovering from injuries will be a key to how things shape up in the fall.

With that in mind, on the following pages we preview some of the players who will be responsible for making Solich's second season more successful than last year's 9-4 campaign.

#58 Demoiné Adams

Right Rush End

6-2, 225, Fr.

Pine Bluff, Ark.

Adams might be undersized for a rush end, but he compensates with strength and extraordinary quickness. He had four sacks in two major scrimmages prior to the spring game. "Once he learns how to use all that quickness, I think he'll be an outstanding player," said rush ends coach Nelson Barnes.



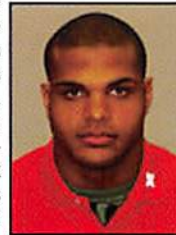
#38 Dan Alexander

I-Back

6-0, 245, Jr.

Wentzville, Mo.

Alexander missed spring practice while continuing to recover from reconstructive knee surgery but should be ready to go in the fall. He's not as flashy as DeAngelo Evans, but he brings a different dimension to the I-back position with his size, strength and speed. His problem is staying healthy.



He started twice last season, carrying 67 times for 360 yards and four touchdowns. Before suffering the knee injury on his third carry in the Kansas State game, he "was coming into his own at I-back and becoming a major factor in offensive output," said running backs coach Dave Gillespie.

#82 Sean Applegate

Wingback

5-9, 185, Sr.

Lincoln (High), Neb.

Applegate was competing with junior John Gibson for the starting job in the spring, before senior Shevin Wiggins learned the NCAA had granted him another season of eligibility. Applegate will still be in the wingback rotation, but not as a starter. "Sean has had to sit behind some pretty good players," said receivers coach Ron Brown. "It has not been an easy time for him." But he has persisted.

He gained valuable experience last season when Lance Brown was sidelined by a broken foot.

#51 Matt Baldwin

Center

6-1, 290, Sr.

Arvada (Bear Creek), Colo.

Baldwin "reminds me of kind of a Matt Hoskinson," said teammate Dominic Raiola. Hoskinson was an integral part of the 1997 national championship line. He was regarded as a starter even though he never started. He was the top backup at guard and center. Baldwin also can play both positions. But the plan is for linemen to concentrate on one position this season, so he'll probably back up Raiola.



#94 Damien Bauman

Tight End

6-3, 260, Sr.

Auburndale, Fla.

Bauman played in four games last season, after transferring from Central Florida. There's opportunity at tight end. Receivers coach Ron Brown will have to settle on at least one more to alternate with senior T.J. DeBates and sophomore Tracey Wistrom. Bauman "has the potential to develop into a really fine blocker," according to Coach Frank Solich. The problem is, Nebraska is well stocked with scholarship tight ends. When recruit Trevor Johnson arrives in the fall, there will be six.

#14 Dion Booker

Free Safety

6-1, 205, Soph.

Oceanside (El Camino), Calif.

Internet rumors had Booker moving to outside linebacker in the spring, which was news to defensive backs coach George Darlington. Booker played in every regular-season game except Colorado. He missed that game because of an injury to his left knee, which was repaired by surgery in early December.

He has potential, and came on in the spring. But competition in the secondary is stiff.

#39 Josh Brown

Kicker

6-2, 185, Fr.

Foyil, Okla.

During the spring, defensive backs coach George Darlington often asked Brown if he was interested in playing defensive back. Darlington's question was tongue-in-cheek, sort of. Brown is an

exceptional athlete and probably could play defensive back, according to kickers coach Dan Young.

"He's a good enough athlete that Coach (Frank) Solich told me once that we should have recruited another kicker and moved Josh to cornerback," said Young. But the Cornhuskers are in need of someone to succeed Kris Brown, himself a good athlete. And Josh Brown is eager to do so.

#21 Mike Brown

Rover

5-10, 205, Sr.

Scottsdale (Saguaro), Ariz.

Brown has gotten his share of recognition, but his ability probably hasn't been acknowledged to the degree it should be, or would be if he weren't in the same secondary as Ralph Brown. "I feel that he's one of the greatest safeties in the nation, very underrated," said teammate Keyuo Craver.

Mike, who has started 26 consecutive games, led the team and set a position record with 102 tackles last season. "Mike is already a great leader for us," Coach Frank Solich said. "He doesn't have to develop any more in that area. He has been very outspoken, very verbal in his leadership."

He is also a two-time, first-team Academic All-Big 12 honoree.



#22 Ralph Brown

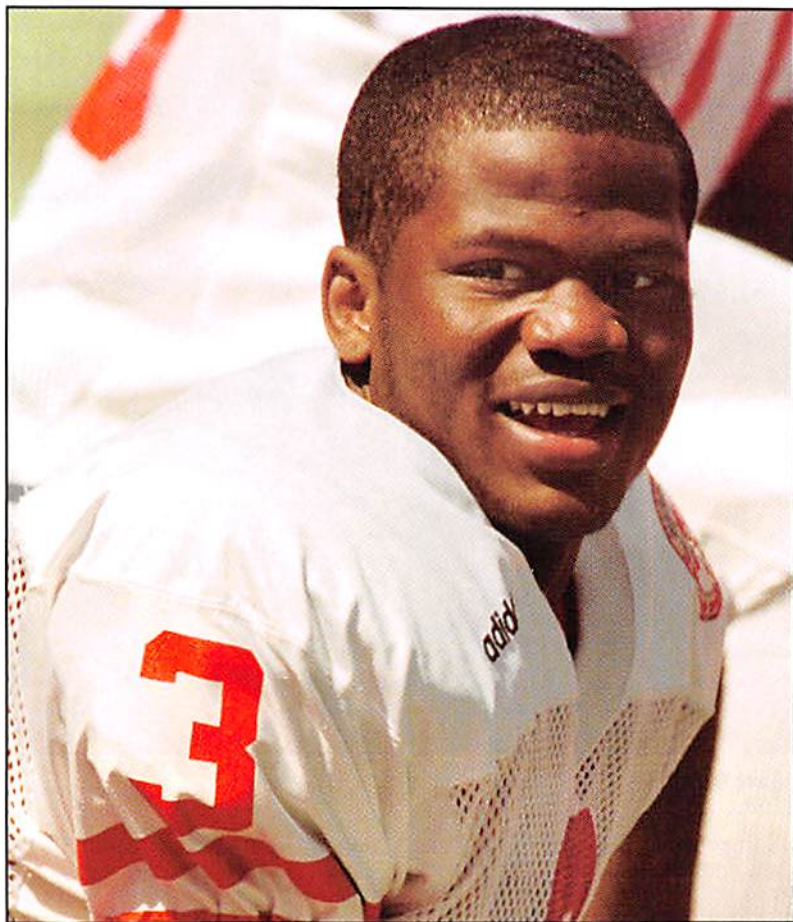
Right Corner

5-10, 180, Sr.

Hacienda Heights (Bishop Amat), Calif.

Brown, a two-time first-team all-conference selection, is again a candidate for the Jim Thorpe Award as the nation's outstanding collegiate defensive back. He has started at right cornerback all 39 games of his Cornhusker career, which began as a true freshman. He holds school records for pass breakups in a game (seven), season (14) and career (35), and has intercepted eight passes. Like Mike Brown, he's a leader, even though "he's probably not as verbal as Mike,"





Keyuo Craver

said Coach Frank Solich.

"Everybody knows Ralph Brown is a great player," teammate Keyuo Craver said. "I've just got a lot of respect for them (Ralph and Mike Brown) because they're down to earth."

#36 Correll Buckhalter **I-Back**

**6-0, 220, Jr.
Collins, Miss.**

As in the fall, Buckhalter was the only healthy I-back in the spring, which he finished off by rushing for 90 yards and a touchdown in the Red-White game. "At times this spring he's looked pretty good on runs. But other times he's looked for soft spots rather than up-field running," Coach Frank Solich said. "There are times when you just have to make one move and go forward. You look at all the backs who have been really good here; they have that instinctive thing



where they don't hesitate and turn up-field."

The bottom line, however, is that Buckhalter has always answered the call. He's reliable, rushing for a team-high 799 yards and eight touchdowns last season. He averaged 5.6 yards per carry.

#39 Ben Buettenback **Middle Linebacker**

**5-11, 220, Sr.
Hastings, Neb.**

Buettenback earned his third letter, despite playing in only five games last season. His size is an obvious detriment, but he compensates with a walkon's determination.

He will resume competition with sophomores Jamie Burrow and Jon Coyne, a walkon from Omaha Westside, and redshirted freshman Tony Tata in the fall as a backup to junior Carlos Polk. He was credited with a combined five tackles in the Red-White game, switching sides at halftime.



#48 Jamie Burrow **Middle Linebacker**

**6-1, 235, Soph.
Ames, Iowa**

Burrow played primarily on special teams in his first season. He was a member of the No. 1 kickoff return and punt return teams, as well as being on the punt coverage second team. He will be competing for increased playing time in the fall as the top backup to junior Carlos Polk. He gave notice that he is ready by making six tackles, including two for losses totaling 5 yards, in the Red-White game.

He was a first-team Academic All-Big 12 honoree as a redshirted freshman.

#3 Keyuo Craver **Left Cornerback**

**5-10, 190, Soph.
Harleton, Texas**

Craver, one of only three true freshmen who played last season, can play nickel back as well as cornerback. He also played on the kickoff coverage and punt return teams. The former high school running back would like to return punts this season in addition to his other duties.

"His problem is, he's too good of an athlete," defensive backs coach George Darlington said. "We're at the point we have to be careful not to wear him out with defensive play and special teams play."

"He's a very talented athlete," said Coach Frank Solich. However, the likelihood of his returning punts diminished some when Shevin Wiggins was granted another season of eligibility in mid-April.

#7 Eric Crouch **Quarterback**

**6-1, 196, Soph.
Omaha (Millard North), Neb.**

Crouch's strength is running options, an area in which he was limited during the spring because, with junior Bobby Newcombe sidelined, the primary goal was to keep him healthy. Though the numbers don't necessarily reflect it, his focus was to improve his passing. In two major scrimmages and the Red-White game, he completed only 8-of-22 passes for 148 yards, with two interceptions.



He was sacked eight times, however, and the green pullover jersey he wore to let defenders know they needed to hold up also hampered his ability to scramble when pass plays broke down.

"I'd have to say I feel 10 times better than I did last year," said Crouch.

And, most importantly, he remained healthy throughout the spring.

#3 Matt Davison

Split End

6-1, 180, Jr.

Tecumseh, Neb.

Davison is on pace to be second in career receptions at Nebraska by the time he finishes two seasons from now. His 43 catches already rank 25th. And he needs just 40 more to pass Jeff Kinney at No. 2 behind Johnny Rodgers. Davison's 32 receptions last season were the most since 1983.

He's no speed-burner, but he did run the 40 in a career-best 4.57 seconds in post-winter conditioning testing. "I've told guys before not to just look at the 40 times," said receivers coach Ron Brown. "Matt will beat you with everything. He beats you with good smarts. He sets you up."

#85 T. J. DeBates

Tight End

6-3, 250, Sr.

Stewartville, Minn.

DeBates started eight games last season when the Cornhuskers opened with double-tight end alignments. Even though he has only two career pass receptions, "he's an excellent receiver," Coach Frank Solich said prior to last season. "He's shown at times that he's a good blocker. But he needs to work on that. We're confident he will." DeBates did, of course, and he will have to continue to do so.

"There's no question at the tight end spot we need to block better. We need them to be an integral part of that offensive line when it comes to the running game," said Solich.

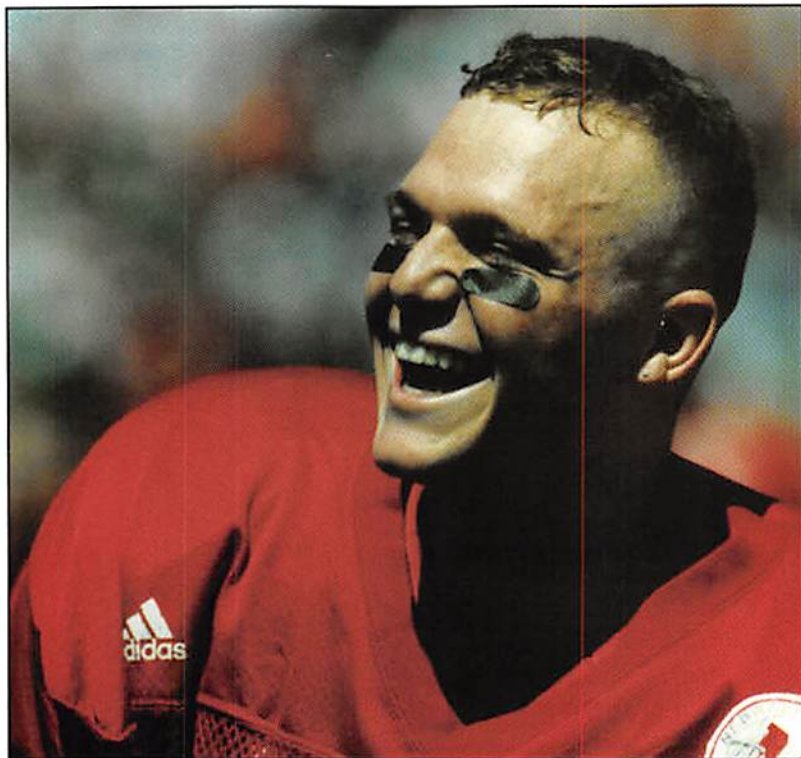
#2 Mike Demps

Rover

5-10, 195, Fr.

Fort Worth (Dunbar) Texas

Demps attracted attention by returning a kickoff 100 yards for a touchdown in the spring game. But



Matt Davison

he impressed the coaches before that, enough so that he was moved from cornerback to rover. He also could be used at nickel back. "Michael's really a physical guy," said defensive coordinator Charlie McBride.

"I think playing corner has helped him because he's playing man-to-man on a receiver a lot. The thing now is the learning part of it, learning the inside (rover or strong safety). The inside people, it's harder to learn, all the adjustments they have to make and things like that. But Michael is a smart kid."

Demps was hampered by a hamstring injury in the spring.

#4 DeAngelo Evans

I-Back

5-9, 215, Jr.

Wichita (Collegiate), Kan.

Evans, who underwent arthroscopic knee surgery following the season, participated in some non-contact practice near the end of spring. That was positive, as was his attitude. His knee was fine but there was no reason to risk injury, he said, vowing to be in peak physical condition by August.

If he is able to regain his fresh-

man form, when he rushed for 776 yards and 14 touchdowns, and remain healthy, he could take his place among the outstanding I-backs in recent Cornhusker history. He was an exceptional running back before being beset by injuries, beginning with a pelvic problem.

"He'll be a great back again," said Coach Frank Solich.

#19 Clint Finley

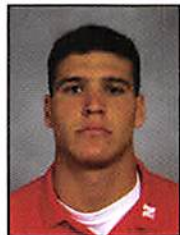
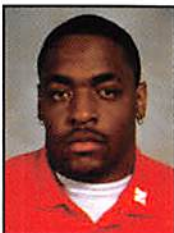
Free Safety

6-0, 205, Jr.

Cuero, Texas

Finley started the final six games last season, including the Holiday Bowl, after missing the first three because of a left knee strain suffered during fall practice. He was credited with 28 tackles, including three for losses totaling 13 yards. He also shared the team lead with three pass interceptions, returning the third 42 yards for the Cornhuskers' only touchdown in a 16-14 victory against Colorado.

He's among the team's most aggressive tacklers, which might have contributed to an Internet rumor that he would be moved to outside linebacker during spring practice. He was not.



#83 Craig Fischer

Split End

6-0, 175, Sr.

Leigh, Neb.

Fischer is among a dozen or so seniors who walked on. He joined the team in the spring of 1996. "There's not too many of us left," said wingback Sean Applegate, another senior walk-on and Fischer's close friend. Fischer played in five games and earned a letter on the 1997 national championship team. But the competition at split end was such last season that he played in only one game.

#8 John Gibson

Split End/Wingback

5-11, 180, Jr.

Papillion (LaVista), Neb.

Gibson played well in the spring after a disappointing sophomore season that followed a redshirted freshman season cut short by a torn anterior cruciate ligament suffered during practice the week after the opener. Gibson caught two passes in the opener against Akron and appeared ready to challenge Shevin Wiggins and Lance Brown for playing time. But the knee injury changed that.

Gibson, who played in 10 games last season without catching a pass, had a changed attitude in the spring, said receivers coach Ron Brown. "We are really counting on him to play very well now. And it's very clear that he knows what's going on around here. You can see the attitude adjustment."



#5 DeJuan Groce

Left Cornerback

5-10, 190, Fr.

Garfield Heights, Ohio

Groce was impressive enough last fall that the coaches considered playing him as a true freshman. He even suited up for three games before the final decision to redshirt him was made. An injured Achilles tendon contributed to the decision, as did the play of Keyuo Craver, another freshman.

Groce backed up All-America candidate Ralph Brown during spring practice.

He and roommate Mike Demps,



also a redshirted freshman who figures prominently in plans for the secondary, "showed good athletic ability and gained valuable experience, really, in a lot of ways through their redshirt season," Coach Frank Solich said. That showed during the spring.

#17 Dan Hadenfeldt

Kicker

5-11, 190, Sr.

Des Moines (Valley), Iowa

Hadenfeldt, a walk-on from Des Moines, Iowa, will continue to compete in fall practice with redshirted freshman Josh Brown for kicking jobs. Competition between the two friends was spirited enough in the spring that nothing was decided, according to Coach Frank Solich.

Hadenfeldt was 2-for-2 on extra-point kicks in 1997. He could end up as the punter, with Brown handling the placekicking and each backing up the other. Hadenfeldt averaged 48.9 yards per punt in the spring on 10 punts during two major scrimmages and the Red-White game.



#80 Larry Henderson

Split End

6-1, 190, Sr.

Des Moines (Valley), Iowa

Henderson learned in the spring that barring a successful appeal to the NCAA this will be his only season at Nebraska. Because he enrolled at Santa Monica, Calif., College before enlisting in the Navy, his five-year eligibility clock began in 1993. Although time spent in the Navy is not included, this will count as his fifth year because of his two years at West Los Angeles Community College.

Henderson, who also competes on the track team, has exceptional speed. He says he has run the 40-yard dash in 4.28 seconds and is "used to running" it in a consistent 4.3 seconds.



#55 Russ Hochstein

Right Guard

6-3, 280, Jr.

Hartington (Cedar Catholic), Neb.

Hochstein, who started the final four games including the Holiday Bowl at right guard last season, is

a rising star in the offensive line.

He's not exceptionally big but he's quick and aggressive. He was fifth among the linemen with 71 "pancake" blocks, including 15 against Washington and 11 against Kansas State. He was bothered by a neck injury during a spring in which the line went back to basics.

Despite being only a junior, Hochstein also is taking on leadership responsibilities.



#50 Julius Jackson

Weakside Linebacker

6-1, 240, Sr.

Gainesville, Texas

Jackson practiced twice during the spring before joining Eric Johnson on the sideline because of an injury. He and Johnson will alternate in the fall. Jackson, who missed two games last season because of a right knee strain, was credited with 24 tackles, including two sacks. He also had five quarterback hurries, two of which led to interceptions, and he broke up one pass.

He came on strong at season's end, making six tackles in the Colorado game and following that effort with six tackles, including two for losses totaling 12 yards, in the Holiday Bowl game.



#27 Eric Johnson

Weakside Linebacker

6-1, 205, Sr.

Phoenix (Alhambra), Ariz.

Johnson, who regained a season of eligibility from the NCAA, missed spring practice following shoulder surgery after the Holiday Bowl game. He's a play-maker, with 4.43 speed in the 40-yard dash and a determination that kept him in the Colorado game last season until the shoulder had been dislocated three times. He was the team's fourth-leading tackler last season with 70, including 11 for losses totaling 52 yards and six quarterback sacks. He also had six quarterback hurries.

He's an emotional player and will be a team leader in the fall.



#69 Adam Julch

Left Tackle

6-5, 320, Sr.

Omaha (Burke), Neb.

Even though he was sidelined by injuries during the spring, Julch kept involved, working with the young players. "He's like a coach to them," said sophomore center Dominic Raiola. "He helps a lot because we only have two offensive line coaches and three stations. So he's at one of the stations, helping."

Julch started 12 games, including the Holiday Bowl, but was hampered by the effects of a dislocated ankle suffered in the 1998 spring game and was never really at full-speed.

He was seventh on the team in "pancake" blocks with 57.



#91 Loran Kaiser

Defensive Tackle

6-4, 290, Jr.

Farwell (St. Paul), Neb.

Kaiser, whose quickness has always been an asset, now has the size of a Big 12 defensive tackle. He started 10 games including the Holiday Bowl, after beginning last season as the backup to Jason Wiltz, who was subsequently moved to nose-tackle. Kaiser was credited with 45 tackles, including 10 for losses totaling 27 yards and 5.5 quarterback sacks. He had a sack in four consecutive games. He also caused two fumbles during the regular season and recovered a fumble in the Holiday Bowl.

He's very active on the inside, an excellent pass rusher, as the sacks reflect.



#57 Chris Kelsay

Left Rush End

6-5, 255, Soph.

Auburn, Neb.

Kelsay has inherited brother Chad's No. 57 jersey. "I tell Chris all the time I expect him to be better than his big brother, and I thought his big brother was pretty good," said rush ends coach Nelson Barnes. Kelsay was good enough to play as a true freshman. He suited up for four games before deciding to redshirt, in fact. He's

still learning, according to defensive coordinator Charlie McBride.

"When you're young and you get in like that, sometimes you just kind of play and you don't think. You get all mixed up. It just takes time. But I think he'll really be good," McBride said.

#22 Ben Kingston

Fullback

6-1, 240, Sr.

Omaha (Westside), Neb.

Kingston, who wears a brace on his right knee because of a torn ligament suffered in the spring of 1997, has persisted, playing as a back-up to Joel Makovicka the last two seasons after walking on from Omaha Westside. He has gotten only 12 carries, gaining 16 yards, during his Cornhusker career. "I don't think it's so much a matter of what Ben didn't do. It's just a matter of having a guy who really had a lot of ability and experience at the position (ahead of him)," said running backs coach Dave Gillespie.

"Ben has hung in there and patiently waited for his opportunities."



#47 Josh Kohl

Weakside Linebacker

6-1, 230, Sr.

Hastings, Neb.

With seniors Eric Johnson and Julius Jackson sidelined by injuries in the spring, Kohl made the most of an opportunity to play with the top defensive units. He played in every game last season, primarily on special teams, making 10 tackles and recovering a fumbled punt against Iowa State.

"This place is made on guys like Josh Kohl," linebackers coach Craig Bohl said of the walkon from Hastings, Neb. "He doesn't complain about playing time, and when he does get to play, he plays very well."

#75 Kyle Kollmorgen

Offensive Tackle

6-5, 290, Soph.

Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.

Kollmorgen is young and still learning. He had an opportunity to take some snaps with the top units during spring practice and could contribute as a backup in the fall, depending on his progress during preseason practices. Among the

others in that situation are redshirted freshmen Matt Shook and Jeff Sidwell and senior Aaron Havlovic. Sidwell and Havlovic are walkons.

#29 Gregg List

Rover

5-11, 220, Sr.

Valentine, Neb.

List, a walkon from Valentine, Neb., has earned three letters, playing primarily on special teams. He was a finalist for the team's "Lifter of the Year Award" presented to rush end Kyle Vanden Bosch in the spring. List's strength index was second-best all-time among defensive backs. His problem in getting on the field more is a result of the fact that the Cornhuskers are well-stocked with defensive backs.



#70 Jason Lohr

Nosetackle

6-2, 275, Soph.

Tulsa (Jenks), Okla.

Lohr was among only three true freshmen who played last season. The others were Keyuo Craver, a defensive back, and Jeremy Slechta, another defensive tackle. Lohr played because he "had so much size and strength over me and (Jon) Clanton when we first started," said Slechta. Clanton, a third scholarship defensive tackle, redshirted. Lohr played in every game and made seven tackles, including one sack. He and Slechta came "a long way: in the spring, said defensive coordinator Charlie McBride.

#1 Frankie London

Wingback

5-11, 170, Sr.

Lake Charles (LaGrange), La.

London missed spring practice while trying to recover from the broken left leg he suffered returning a punt in the Kansas game. He underwent further surgery on the leg in mid-April. It's a hard-luck situation for the converted quarterback, who would have benefitted from 15 spring practices at his new position. He'll have to develop quickly in the fall, assuming the leg heals sufficiently.





Bobby Newcombe

#32 Greg McGraw

Free Safety

6-2, 200, Sr.

Millville, N.J.

McGraw, a walkon from Millville, N.J., attracted attention by returning a fumble 94 yards for a touchdown in the Red-White game. He was the No. 3 free safety and a member of the kickoff coverage team last season, playing in every game and making three tackles. He and sophomore Dion Booker were among those competing with returning starter Clint Finley in the spring. With 11 and possibly 12 games plus a bowl game, "we're going to need everybody," said defensive backs coach George Darlington.

#15 Willie Miller

Fullback

6-1, 240, Jr.

Omaha (Bellevue West), Neb.

Miller was able to begin practicing near the end of the spring, after recovering from surgery to correct an abdominal injury. In limited action, "I think he's showed signs of really being what we look for at the fullback spot," said Coach Frank



Solich. "He's a little bigger. I think he's certainly more confident in himself at this point in time in his career. And I think that will all show in the season."

Miller's strength is running but he has made himself a good blocker. He carried 19 times for 94 yards and two touchdowns as Joel Makovicka's backup last season.

#12 Bobby Newcombe

Quarterback

6-0, 195, Jr.

Albuquerque (Highland), N.M.

Despite not being able to participate while recovering from surgery on his left knee in December, Newcombe was a familiar presence at practice in the spring. He signalled plays from the sideline for the Red team during the Spring Game.

He was able to throw some passes in preparation for competing with sophomore Eric Crouch for the starting job. "With Bobby's work ethic, I don't doubt he'll be able to perform at game level with workouts this fall," said quarterbacks coach Turner Gill.

Newcombe started six games last season, completing 43-of-68 passes for 647 yards and one touchdown, with one interception. He rushed for 195 yards and eight touchdowns.

#37 Tony Ortiz

Strongside Linebacker

6-1, 220, Sr.

Waterbury (Crosby), Conn.

Ortiz missed the final week of spring practice because of a sprained medial collateral ligament, leaving the first-team responsibilities to senior and good friend Brian Shaw. The two again will alternate. Ortiz came on to start the final nine games last season, finishing with 46 tackles, including nine for losses totaling 28 yards. He was outstanding in the Holiday Bowl game, making eight tackles.

Early in their careers, Ortiz was regarded as the better pass rusher of the two and Shaw was regarded as being stronger against the run. But the situation is more balanced now. "I think Tony has improved greatly against the run," said linebackers coach Craig Bohl.



#5 Jeff Perino

Quarterback

6-2, 215, Sr.

Durango, Colo.

Perino was sidelined by a shoulder injury during the first half of the Red-White game, but he should be ready to resume competition with junior Jay Runty for a backup job in the fall. Perino returned after two seasons of medical-exempt status because of recurrent knee problems. In many ways, he's like a freshman quarterback. "He has (running) ability, and he has good throwing ability. But just putting it all together will take some time," Coach Frank Solich said after Perino's first major scrimmage of the spring.

On the plus side, "he has great intelligence," quarterbacks coach Turner Gill said.

#13 Carlos Polk

Middle Linebacker

6-2, 250, Jr.

Rockford (Guilford), Ill.

Polk is poised to wear a first-team Blackshirt, something he has yet to be issued despite playing in every game his first two seasons. He was Jay Foreman's backup last season. He made 22 tackles, including five for losses totaling 24 yards and one sack. He caused two fumbles, one of which he recovered, broke up one pass and intercepted a pass against California. His strength is stopping the run. He was the "bubble" linebacker. He also has made a name for himself on the kickoff coverage team.

When he gets a Blackshirt, which should be when they are issued in the fall, "a tear might come to my eye," he said. "Ever since I got here, that Blackshirt has meant a lot."



#54 Dominic Raiola

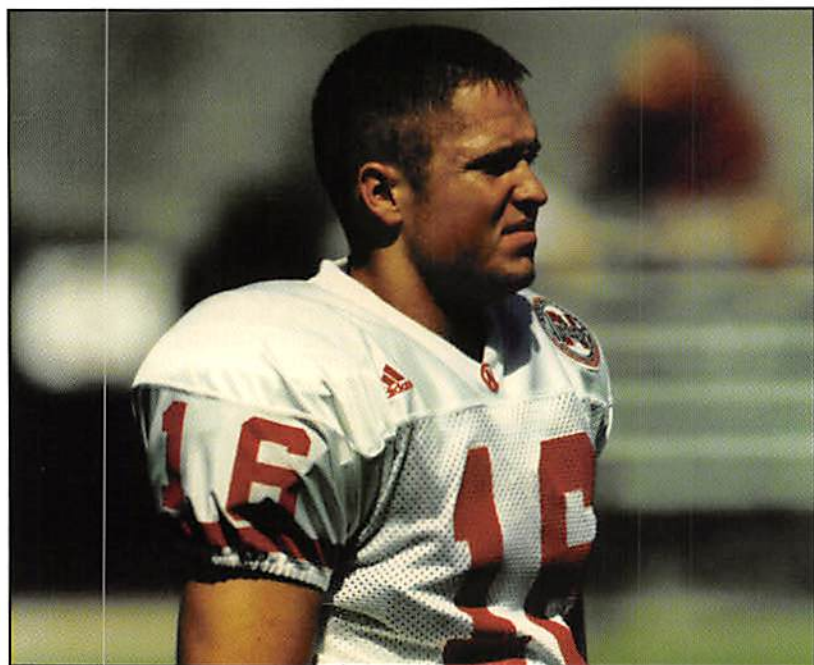
Center

6-2, 295, Soph.

Honolulu (St. Louis), Hawaii

Raiola was the first freshman to start in Nebraska's offensive line since Rob Zatechka started one game in 1991. Raiola started the last two in 1998, at left guard. He settled in at center in the spring, succeed-





Jay Runty

ing Josh Heskeu. Raiola was credited with 76 "pancake" blocks, including double figures in four games. Despite his youth, he is an emotional leader in the line and likely will be an honors candidate.

He was a finalist for the "Lifter of the Year Award" presented in the spring. Among other things, he added more than 10 pounds of lean muscle mass during winter conditioning.

He also handles the deep snapping.

#16 Jay Runty
Quarterback
6-0, 205, Jr.
Elkhorn, Neb.

Runty was in what he described as a "dogfight" with senior Jeff Perino for a backup position in the spring. During winter conditioning, he added 10 pounds of muscle while dropping his time in the 40-yard dash from 4.73 to 4.65 seconds, evidence of his determination. "I think Jeff and Jay have similar assets," said quarterbacks coach Turner Gill. "Probably their biggest asset is throwing the football."

Runty has yet to throw a pass in a game. He's played in only seven in two seasons. He had impressive passing statistics in the spring, however. In two major scrimmages and the Red-White game, he completed 14-of-22 for 184 yards, with one interception. "We'll just have to see how it works out," Gill said.

#66 Jon Rutherford
Left Guard
6-3, 295, Soph.
Midwest City, Okla.

Rutherford, who played in only four games last season but saw enough action to earn a letter, had a solid spring and will go into the fall as the third guard, backing up senior



James Sherman and junior Russ Hochstein. He is the Cornhuskers' eighth scholarship recruit from Oklahoma since 1988.

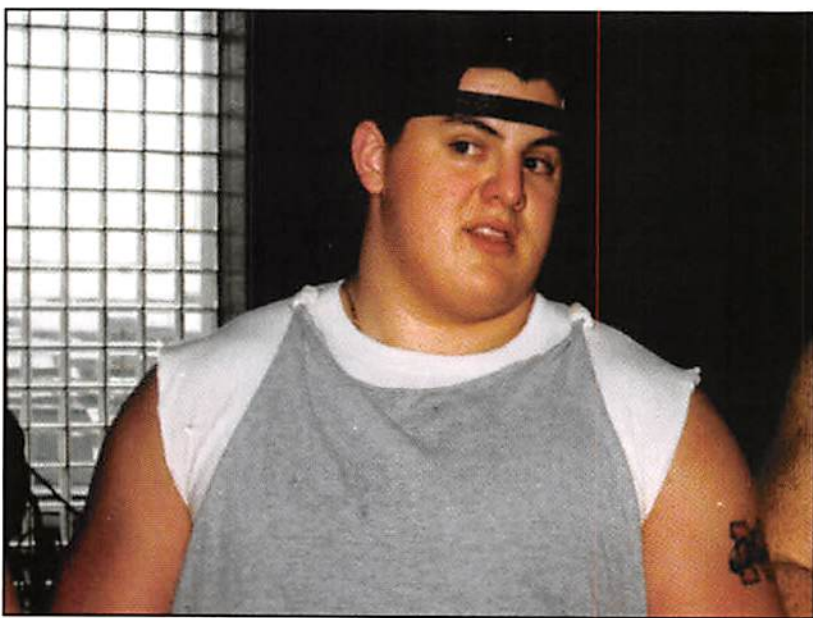
The late Victor Stachmus is believed to have been the first.

#65 Jason Schwab
Right Tackle
6-1, 300, Sr.
Eagan
(Cretin-Derham Hall), Minn.

The steady Schwab earned All-Big 12 honorable mention from the conference coaches. He was the only Cornhusker offensive lineman to start every game last season, finishing third on the team in "pancake" blocks with 79. His career-high was 12 against California. As with the other linemen, Schwab was determined to get better in the spring. "We have improved strength and we have improved timing," offensive line coach Milt Tenopir said. "I think we improved as finishers, too."

#4 Scott Shanle
Strongside Linebacker
6-2, 225, Fr.
St. Edward, Neb.

Shanle, a walkon from St. Edward, Neb., attracted attention in the Red-White game, making four tackles, including two quarterback sacks for losses totaling 18 yards. With seniors Brian Shaw and Tony Ortiz handling strongside linebacker, there's not much opportunity this season. But Coach Frank Solich is already looking to the future at all of the linebacking positions. And Shanle could figure in.



Jason Schwab

#46 Brian Shaw
Strongside Linebacker
6-1, 220, Sr.
Deweese (Sandy Creek),
Neb.

Shaw again will alternate with senior Tony Ortiz, who missed the final week of spring practice because of a sprained medial collateral ligament. He's experienced, starting the first four games last season as well as eight games during the 1997 national championship season. He made 39 tackles a year ago, including four for losses totaling 11 yards. Early in his career, he was considered better against the run while Ortiz was better in passing situations. Now "Brian is very strong in coverage," said linebackers coach Craig Bohl. "I don't know if we can say one is the run guy and one is the pass guy anymore."



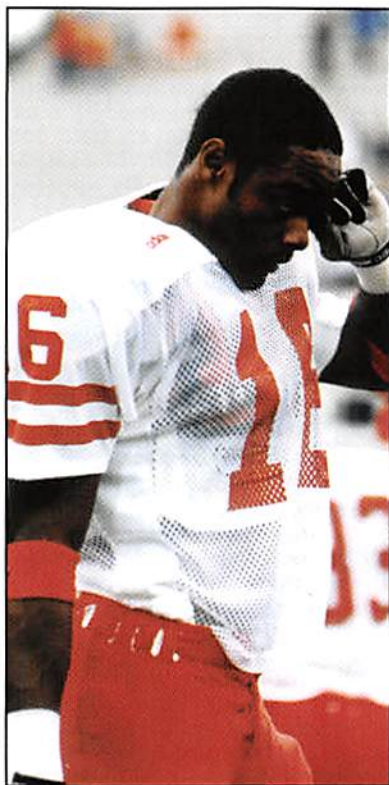
#63 James Sherman
Left Guard
6-4, 295, Sr.
LaVerne (Whittier), Calif.

Sherman, among the strongest offensive line-men, was silent through most of the spring, preferring to focus on getting better. "We feel we have improved all spring," he told the Lincoln Journal Star just before the Red-White game. "We feel we made a lot of the right moves in winter conditioning, and we're all stronger, faster and better blockers." He was a finalist for the "Lifter of the Year Award," irrefutable evidence of his dedication. He gained 14 pounds of lean muscle mass during winter conditioning.



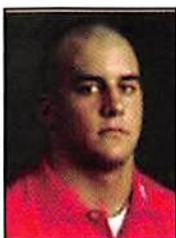
#56 Jeremy Slechta
Defensive Tackle
6-6, 280, Soph.
LaVista (Papillion-LaVista),
Neb.

Slechta was among three true freshmen who played last season. The others were cornerback Keyuo Craver and defensive tackle Jason Lohr. He played in nine games, including the Holiday Bowl, and was credited with nine tackles, including three for losses of 11



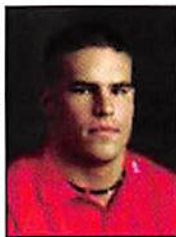
Erwin Swiney

yards and one sack. His height is a bonus in rushing the passer, and he's still gaining weight. Playing for Coach Gene Suhr at Papillion-LaVista, Neb., High facilitated his transition. "A lot of our program at Papillion was based on what they do here," he said.



#92 Justin Smith
Rush End
6-4, 250, Fr.
Sherman, Texas

Smith might have had an opportunity to play as a true freshman if not for a shoulder injury in fall camp. Because of the shoulder problem, he's a little behind some of the other young rush ends, according to defensive coordinator Charlie McBride. "But he's a player," McBride said. "I mean, there's no question he's going to play. Whether it's this year or not, I don't know. But he'll play."



Smith was outstanding in the Red-White game. He was credited with a game-high eight tackles, including three for losses totaling 14 yards and two quarterback sacks.

#34 Randy Stella
Weakside Linebacker
6-0, 205, Soph.
Omaha (Benson), Neb.

Probably the only thing standing in the way of Stella's seeing considerable playing time this season is the fact that seniors Eric Johnson and Julius Jackson are at the position. But Stella has the ability to be a star. Defensive coordinator Charlie McBride said he wanted to see what Stella could do in the spring, and "I found out quick. They'd (opponents) better never have a tackle blocking him alone. He (the tackle) won't do it. I don't care if he's a pro tackle; he's not going to get it done. He (Stella) can fly."



#16 Erwin Swiney
Left Cornerback
6-0, 185, Jr.
Lincoln (Northeast), Neb.

Swiney has started 23 consecutive games, including two bowls, after taking over for the departed Jerome Peterson as a true freshman on the 1997 national championship team. He was the team's fifth-leading tackler last season, with 61, including 32 unassisted and four for losses of 16 yards. He was credited with two quarterback sacks and 13 pass breakups, which would have tied the school single-season record had Ralph Brown not broken it with two breakups in the Kansas State game.

Swiney was bothered in the spring by a recurrent abdominal injury.



#90 Tony Tata
Middle Linebacker
6-1, 240, Fr.
Honolulu (St. Louis), Hawaii

Tata is among several redshirted freshmen from the 1998 scholarship recruiting class who could contribute in the fall. Among oth-

ers not mentioned elsewhere are offensive lineman Matt Shook, I-back Dahrnan Diedrick, defensive tackle Jon Clanton and tight ends Jon Bowling and Aaron Golliday.

I-back DeAntae Grixby and offensive lineman Nate Kolterman also would have had an opportunity to play had they not suffered injuries during the spring. "When you go through it (the class), most guys have already displayed what you want to see," said Coach Frank Solich. "That's a strong class."



#6 Wilson Thomas
Split End
6-5, 210, Fr.
Omaha (North), Neb.

Developing depth at split end behind junior Matt Davison is a priority for receivers coach Ron Brown. Thomas was among those competing with junior Tom Beveridge and senior Craig Fischer, both walk-ons, in the spring. Thomas has height and athletic ability. His speed is sufficient. "He's not a great blazer, but he is a guy who's going to get bigger and stronger and faster as time goes on," Brown said.

Thomas improved as a blocker in the spring. "It sure helps me when a guy comes in that young who's saying: 'I need to block, and I want to do a great job of it,'" said Brown.



#83 Kyle Vanden Bosch
Left Rush End
6-4, 270, Jr.
Larchwood
(W. Lyon Community), Iowa

Vanden Bosch, Chad Kelsay's backup on the left side last season, succeeds Mike Rucker as the starter on the right side. He won the team's "Lifter of the Year Award" after being a finalist the previous year, improving in the pro agility run (4.07 seconds) and the vertical jump (34.5 inches).



"We believe Kyle is going to be a tremendous player for us. He's shown signs of that early in his career," said Coach Frank Solich. "He's got everything needed to be a great football player. He's got size. He's got strength. He's smart. And he's tremendously aggressive."

Defensive coordinator Charlie McBride compares Vanden Bosch to former Cornhusker All-American Jared Tomich, who now plays for the NFL's New Orleans Saints.

#9 Mark Vedral
Weakside Linebacker
5-11, 210, Soph.
Gregory, S.D.

Vedral earned a letter playing in six games last season, primarily on special teams. He played well in the spring, finishing with a six-tackle performance in the Red-White game. Barring injuries, seniors Eric Johnson and Julius Jackson will handle most of the weakside linebacker duties this season. But there will be plenty of opportunity at the position a year from now, and Vedral could work into the mix.

#58 Dave Volk
Left Tackle
6-5, 295, Soph.
Battle Creek, Neb.

Volk is the latest to represent tiny Battle Creek, Neb., at Nebraska. Among the others have been offensive lineman Matt Hoskinson (1995-97), wide receiver Robb Schnitzler (1984-86) and place-kicker Craig Schnitzler (1987). Volk played in every game as a backup last season and emerged from the spring as the No. 3 tackle, backing up seniors Adam Julch and Jason Schwab. During spring practice, he gained valuable experience working with the first unit in place of Julch, who was held out because of injuries.



#25 Joe Walker
Rover
5-10, 195, Jr.
Arlington (Lamar), Texas

Walker missed spring practice because of a torn left ACL suffered in practice for the Holiday Bowl game. He had additional surgery in May and his status is questionable.

In addition to playing both safety positions, he is the returning starter at nickel back and an outstanding kick returner. He tied an NCAA record by returning a kickoff, a punt and an interception for touchdowns last season.

He made 50 tackles, including 22 unassisted and five for losses. He also increased his career interception total to five with three in 1998. Prior to coming to Nebraska, teammate Keyuo Craver said, he had never heard of Joe Walker, who is "probably the greatest athlete on the team."

Now Craver says Walker "is going to be the man. He's going to be the player of the 90s."



#96 Steve Warren
Nosetackle
6-1, 315, Sr.
Springfield (Kickapoo), Mo.

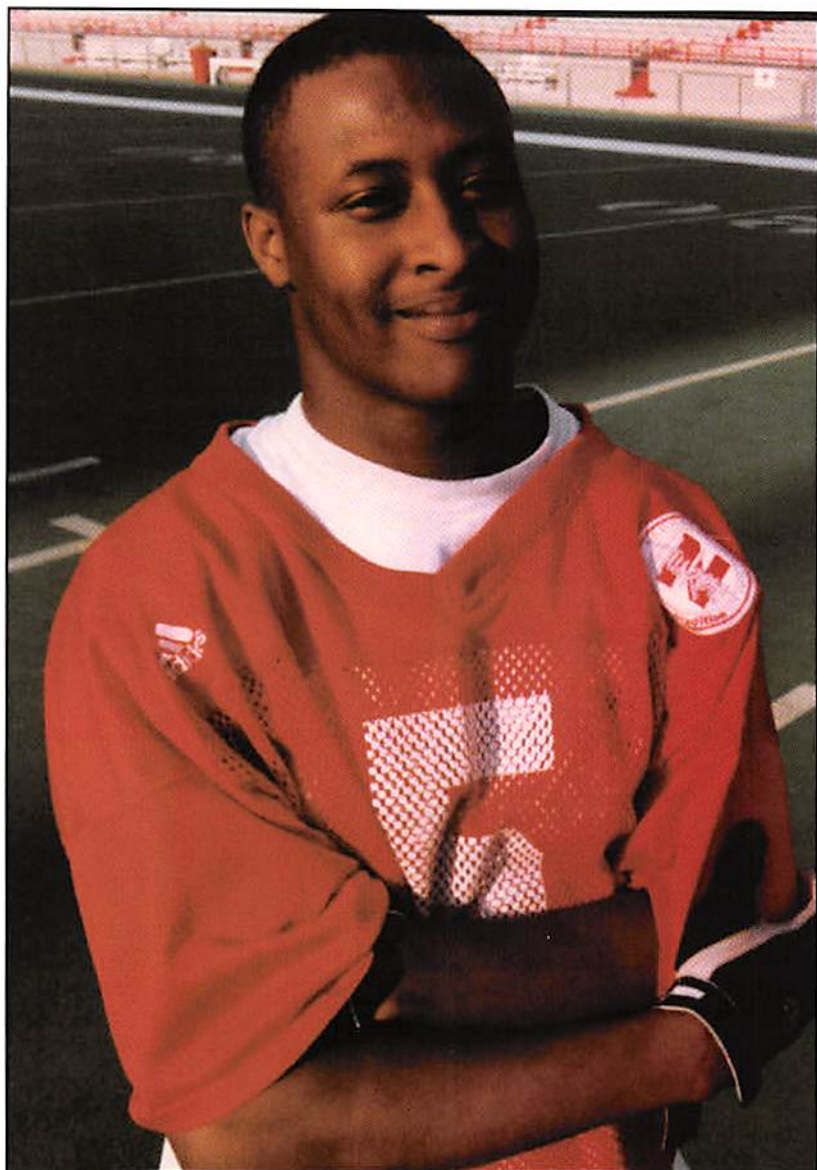
Warren is among a relative handful of players who have gone through without redshirting. He started the first six games last season, then backed up Jason Wiltz, who was moved from tackle to nosetackle. Warren was credited with 26 tackles and proved effective as a pass rusher. He had seven quarterback hurries, two of which caused interceptions, and he broke up four passes.

He was bothered by back spasms, which caused him to miss two games last season. But he held up in the spring and will join junior Loran Kaiser to give the Cornhuskers an experienced interior.



#95 J.P. Wichmann
Rush end
6-4, 220, So.
Shawnee (Mission NW), Kan.

Wichmann's biggest problem is he plays a position with considerable depth. His speed is comparable to that of former Cornhusker All-American Jim Skow, according to defensive coordinator Charlie McBride. Skow was a tackle in the 5-2 base defense Nebraska used at the time.



Shevin Wiggins

#5 Shevin Wiggins

Wingback

5-11, 200, Sr.

Palmetto (Manatee), Fla.

Wiggins learned just before the Red-White game that his appeal to the NCAA had been accepted and he would get an additional season of eligibility. "We went from a talented, inexperienced group to a talented, experienced group," said a pleased receivers coach Ron Brown.

Wiggins alternated with Lance Brown, starting four games last season. He was second to junior split end Matt Davison in receptions with 22 for 326 yards and one



touchdown. Seven of the receptions, for a career-high 97 yards and the touchdown, were against California, an indication of his big-game potential (as if his contribution to Davison's miracle catch at Missouri in 1997 weren't sufficient).

He also is an outstanding punt and kickoff returner.

#81 Aaron Wills

Rush end

6-2, 250, Sr.

Omaha (Burke)

Wills lettered as a tight end as a redshirted freshman in 1996, but he has found a home at rush end, where he backed up Mike Rucker on the right side last season. He plays the left side now. He sometimes is overlooked, with much of the attention focused on Kyle

Vanden Bosch, the other starter.

The two are friends and have a work ethic in common. "I know if I bring up a suggestion of something extra to do, they're off and running with it," said rush ends coach Nelson Barnes.

Vanden Bosch, the team's "Lifter of the Year," credits Wills for helping him win the award. "He just kind of took me in as a freshman," Vanden Bosch said. "I was kind of young, and he showed me just what to do in the weight room. Ever since, he's been kind of my best friend on the team."



#87 Tracey Wistrom

Tight End

6-5, 220, So.

Webb City, Mo.

Wistrom comes by his tenacity naturally. It's a result of growing up with two older brothers: Chance, the high school football coach in Seneca, Mo., and Grant, the former Cornhusker All-American rush end who now plays for the NFL's St. Louis Rams. "I think that kind of comes with the territory," Wistrom said. "You saw what Grant was like; he came in and played rush end here at 220 pounds, which wasn't really heard of. I think it's just something that runs in the family. My dad instilled it in us."



"Sometimes you're going to be beat. But hopefully most of the time you'll come out on top."

Grant, of course, was considerably bigger by the time he finished at Nebraska. Tracey also expects to bulk up before he's done. In the mean time, he'll hold his own with technique and the tenacity.

#20 Wes Woodward

Rover

5-8, 180, So.

Omaha (Burke)

Woodward, from Burke High School in Omaha, is in many ways the definitive walk-on. He compensates for his lack of size with aggressiveness and a willingness to contribute in whatever way he can. He is a backup cornerback, but he earned a letter as a member of the kickoff coverage team.

SCOUT

BIG 12 CO

1999?

***Could we see a
rematch of
1997 when
Dec. 4 rolls
around?***

ING REPORTS NFERENCE

NORTH

- 1 **Nebraska** . . . here come the Huskers, again
- 2 **Colorado** . . . new coach, Rocky Mountain high
- 3 **Kansas State** . . . don't count out the Cats
- 4 **Missouri** . . . dominating defense, so-so offense
- 5 **Iowa State** . . . been down so long, it looks like up
- 6 **Kansas** . . . tough times in Lawrence

SOUTH

- 1 **Texas A&M** . . . two in a row for the Aggies
- 2 **Oklahoma State** . . . can be a contender
- 3 **Texas** . . . come back Shane, or rather, Ricky
- 4 **Texas Tech** . . . would be better with depth
- 5 **Oklahoma** . . . how the mighty have fallen
- 6 **Baylor** . . . just another roadside attraction

Remember the Alamodome? The Big 12 football championship game was played there two seasons ago. Actually, it wasn't much of a game. Nebraska overran Texas A&M 54-16.

The Cornhuskers scored on seven consecutive possessions and led 37-3 at halftime.

Ah, those were the good old days for Nebraska...

OK. That was only the season before last. But the Cornhuskers didn't play for the Big 12 championship in 1998, so it probably seems like a long time ago to Nebraska fans, who have grown accustomed to watching their team compete for the conference and national titles.

Prior to last season, the Cornhuskers had won or shared every conference title but one since 1990. And that one was in 1996, when they lost to Texas in the first Big 12 playoff at St. Louis.

The loss knocked Nebraska out of a national championship game in the Sugar Bowl.

Last season, Kansas State represented the North Division in St. Louis, and suffered an upset loss against Texas A&M that knocked the Wildcats out of a national championship game in the Fiesta Bowl.

A pattern seems to be developing in St. Louis. But maybe it won't hold in San Antonio. Maybe this Big 12 champion will advance to the Bowl Championship Series title game in the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 4, 2000.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Predicting which Big 12 teams will advance to the Alamodome is difficult enough, much less whether either will be in contention for the national title by then.

Having said that, there's a good chance Nebraska and defending champion Texas A&M will be in San Antonio on Dec. 4, for a rematch of the first Big 12 playoff there in 1997, as well as a rematch of their regular-season game at Lincoln on Nov. 6 — something that has yet to happen.

The Aggies already have admitted to looking ahead to the Nebraska game. The Cornhuskers, who lost at College Station, Texas, last season, are just looking to get back into the title chase.

An A&M-Nebraska game for the conference title would have a kind of symmetry. The Cornhuskers were in the first and second Big 12 playoffs. The Aggies were in the second and third.

Neither is a lock, however. A&M will be challenged by Oklahoma State



Red Raider Sports

And then there was one

While Ricky Williams, the Heisman Trophy winner from Texas (right), has moved on to the NFL, Texas Tech's Ricky Williams (above) returns for his junior season. They finished 1-2 in the Big 12 in rushing (the Longhorns' Williams No. 1 in the nation) last season.

in the South Division, and Nebraska is among four teams with realistic chances of winning the North Division.

The others are Colorado, last year's winner Kansas State and Missouri.

In fact, the only teams that probably could be written off as conference title contenders going into the season are Oklahoma and Baylor in the South and Iowa State and Kansas in the North.

No offense, but those four teams probably don't have the firepower to get the job done.

Plus, "when you haven't won, your confidence level is so fragile. It takes some winning and good times for kids to understand what you're talking about," Iowa State Coach Dan McCarney said.

Oklahoma and Baylor hired new

coaches with conference roots in hopes of enjoying the good times that come with winning. The Sooners attracted Bobby Stoops, where he was Steve Spurrier's defensive coordinator at Florida, and the Bears got Kevin Steele from the NFL's Carolina Panthers.

Stoops was an assistant at Kansas State, Steele at Nebraska.

The conference's other new head coach is Gary Barnett, who bought out of a long-term contract at Northwestern to return to Colorado, where he was an assistant to Bill McCartney during the time (1989-91) when the Buffaloes won or shared three consecutive Big Eight titles.

With the arrival of Stoops, Steele and Barnett, half the conference head coaches have been replaced in the last three years. Spike Dykes, with 12 years



Texas Sports Information

at Texas Tech, is the dean of Big 12 football coaches, followed by A&M's Slocum and Kansas State's Snyder, both with 10 seasons.

The conference will be hard-pressed to duplicate its success in 1998, after producing Heisman Trophy winner Ricky Williams of Texas, as well as runner-up Michael Bishop of Kansas State (the Davey O'Brien Award winner), and Lombardi Award winner Dat Nguyen of A&M.

Seven Big 12 teams played in bowl games, and five were ranked in the final Top 25.

In addition, Texas had the nation's consensus No. 1 recruiting class, with A&M not far behind.

Williams, Bishop and Nguyen are gone, as is Missouri's Devin West, who

was third in the Big 12 and fifth in the nation in rushing, and Corby Jones, the Tigers' versatile quarterback.

But another Ricky Williams, this one from Texas Tech, returns to lead a group of talented running backs, capable of giving the conference a sixth consecutive NCAA rushing champion.

Tech's Williams was fourth in the nation in rushing, with 1,582 yards and 13 touchdowns.

Others among the Big 12's top 10 rushers returning are Darren Davis of Iowa State, David Winbush of Kansas, Nathan Simmons of Oklahoma State, Dante Hall of Texas A&M and Correll Buckhalter of Nebraska. De'Mond Parker of Oklahoma opted to submit his name for the NFL draft.

The preponderance of talented run-

ning backs underscores the premium placed on being able to move the ball on the ground — and defending against it — in the conference.

As was the case last season, perhaps to an even greater degree, the Big 12 will be defense-oriented. Five conference teams ranked in the nation's top 13 in total defense, led by Kansas State, which was third. Eight starters return from that defense, five of whom were first- or second-team all-conference.

The five are end Darren Howard, the Big 12 sacks leader, tackle Damion McIntosh, linebacker Mark Simoneau and defensive backs Jarrod Cooper and Lamar Chapman.

The Wildcat offense must be rebuilt, however, around junior quarterback Jonathan Beasley, whom Snyder redshirted last season, taking a chance that Bishop would stay healthy.

Snyder must fashion an offensive line with starters returning at just two positions and find help for receiver Aaron Lockett. He also must compensate for the loss of four assistants.

The biggest concern at Nebraska is keeping front-line players healthy.

Among potential Cornhusker starters who missed most or all of spring practice were quarterback Bobby Newcombe, I-backs DeAngelo Evans and Dan Alexander, offensive tackle Adam Julch, weakside linebacker Eric Johnson and nickel back-kick returner Joe Walker.

Newcombe will compete with Eric Crouch for the starting job in the fall.

Nebraska's strength looks to be its defense, which is two-deep at linebacker and has a veteran secondary, headed up by All-America candidates Ralph Brown and Mike Brown.

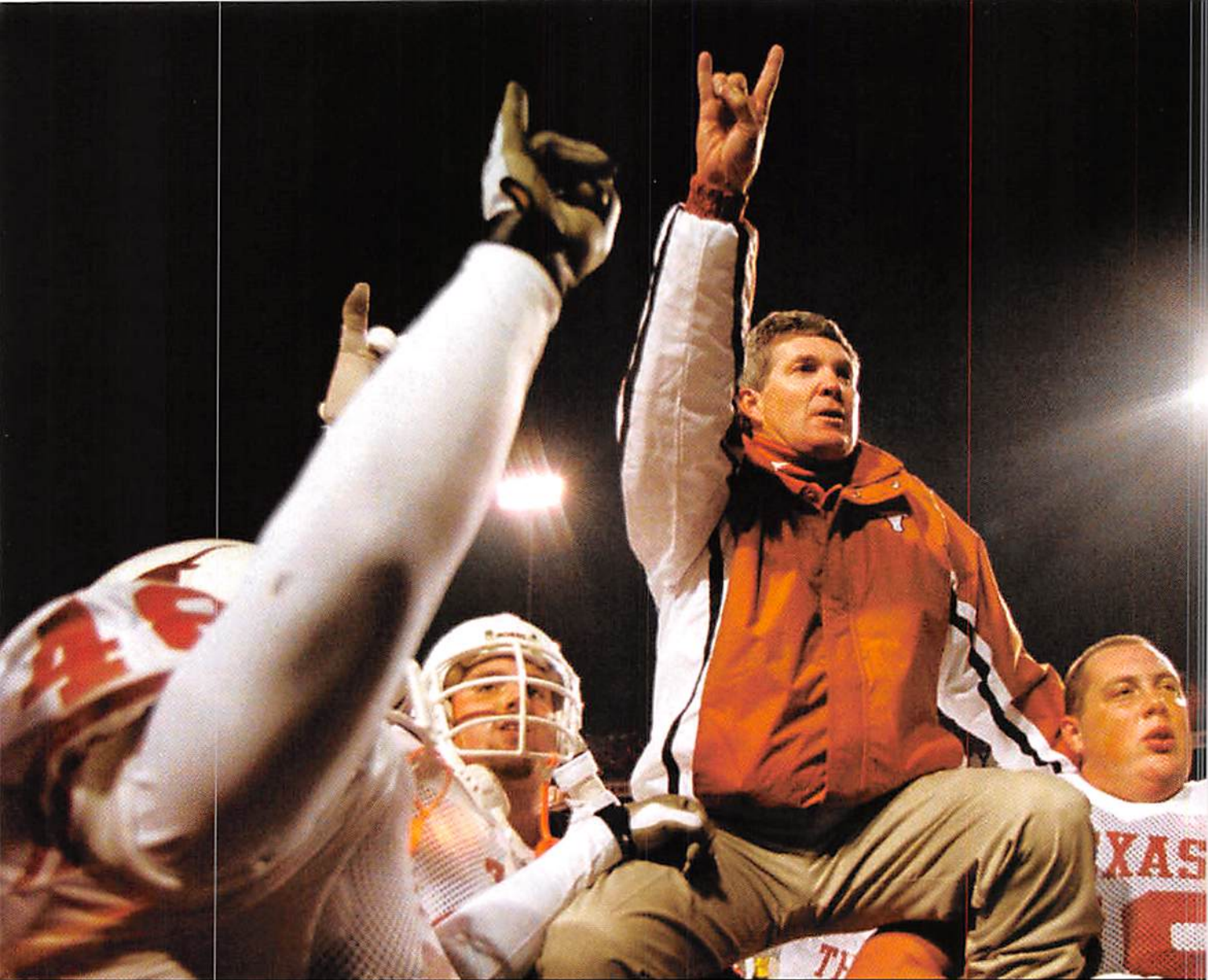
Barnett has installed a West Coast, control-passing offense, which should suit quarterback Mike Moschetti and a receiving corps that includes Javon Green and Marcus Stiggers.

The Buffaloes have a massive offensive line, led by Ryan Johanningmeier and Brad Bedell. What they don't have, or at least haven't had anyway, is a consistent running attack.

Colorado's defense features outside linebacker Fred Jones and cornerbacks Damen Wheeler and Ben Kelly, who also is a big-play threat as a kick returner and played wide receiver in the spring.

Missouri, like Kansas State, is loaded on defense but its offense is suspect.

End Justin Smith, who regularly is compared to former Nebraska All-American and Lombardi Award winner Grant Wistrom, and big-play linebacker Jamonte Robinson lead the way



on defense.

Based on spring practice, the Tigers might alternate quarterbacks Jim Dougherty and Kirk Farmer, who will operate behind a rebuilt line that includes center Rob Riti, an All-America candidate.

Iowa State could escape the North division cellar. The Cyclones have depth behind Davis at I-back, quality pass receivers in Damion Groce and Chris Anthony and veteran linemen. Their quarterback will be unproven, however, whether Sage Rosenfels or junior college transfer Derrick Walker.

In order for the Cyclones to be successful, however that is to be defined, they'll have to shore up a defense that has been among the nation's worst the last couple of seasons.

The same is true for Kansas, which lost at Iowa State in the final game of 1998 to share the North Division cellar. The Jayhawks also could rely on a junior college quarterback, Dylon

Smith, to get the ball to some quality receivers or a talented tailback tandem of Winbush and Mitch Bowles.

Kansas will need to develop a defense if it is to avoid the North cellar.

Defending conference champion A&M has the big-game experience, and success, of last season as well as 18 returning starters to earn the favorite's role going into 1999.

Quarterback Randy McCown, the Aggies' offensive leader, has swift receivers, and two big running backs in Tiki Hardeman and Ja'Mar Toombs as well as Hall, who rushed for 1,024 yards.

Two offensive linemen return, including sophomore Seth McKinney.

The Aggies lost only three defensive starters. But the three were Nguyen, strong safety Rich Coady and outside linebacker Warrick Holdman. Cornerback Jason Webster and nose tackle Ron Edwards are among those

who return from a unit that ranked 10th nationally in total defense and scoring defense.

A&M also has an All-America candidate in punter Shane Lechler.

Oklahoma State's chances of challenging A&M in the South Division depend on quarterback Tony Lindsay, who was inconsistent as a sophomore after an outstanding freshman season.

He'll operate behind a line anchored by Adam Davis, in a backfield that includes Simmons, who underwent off-season knee surgery, and proven backup Jamaal Fobbs.

Even with Davis, however, the line is something of an unknown quantity.

The Cowboys' defense will be typically hard-hitting, led by linebackers Kenyatta Wright and Tarrell Knauls. It also could include much-publicized freshman Chris Massey.

Texas has a much-publicized freshman in quarterback Chris Simms, but he isn't likely to unseat sophomore



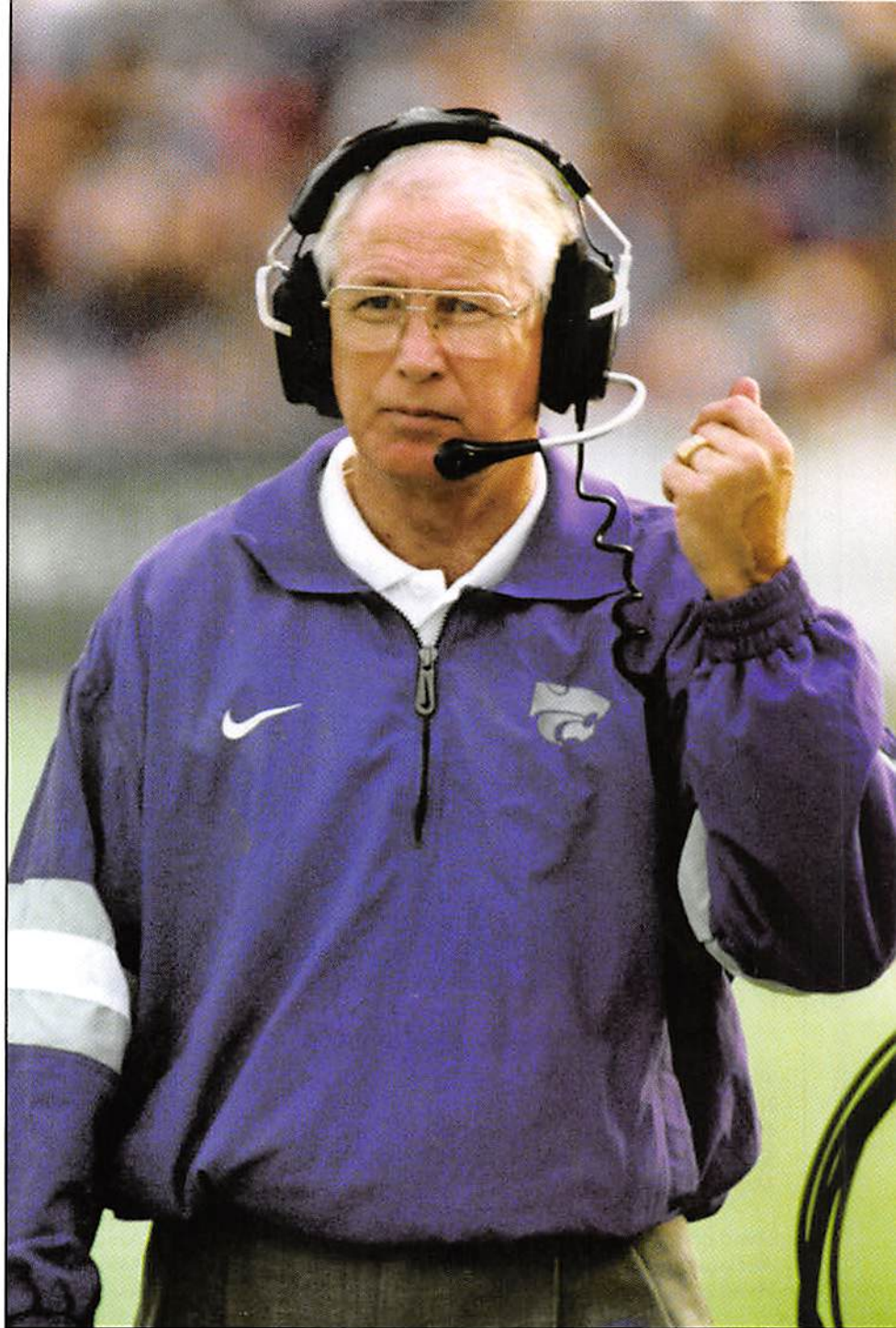
Texas Sports Information

In his first year at Texas, Mack Brown led the Longhorns to a 9-3 season, including a win in Lincoln (above). And, Kansas State's Bill Snyder (right) finally got a win against Nebraska and was named National Coach of the Year.

Major Applewhite, whose passing will be the basis of the Longhorn offense in the post-Williams era. With Wane McGarrity gone, Applewhite's primary receiver is Kwame Cavil.

The defense, which features end Aaron Humphrey and tackles Cedric Woodward and Casey Hampton, will need to support the Longhorns while the offense develops.

The "other Williams" is Tech's primary offensive weapon. He'll run behind a line that includes massive tackle Jonathan "The House" Gray as well as two other returning starters. The Red Raiders also have the Big 12's best tight end in Kyle Allamon, who will play a bigger role as a receiver.



Kansas State Sports Information

End Taurus Rucker succeeds the departed Montae Reagor as the leader of a unit that ranked third in the conference and eighth nationally in total defense last season.

Oklahoma will come out throwing under Stoops, who hired former Kentucky and Brigham Young assistant Mike Leach as his offensive coordinator and recruited quarterback John Heupel from Snow Junior College, where he passed for 2,308 yards and 28 touchdowns last season.

Stoops also is trying to install an aggressive defense similar to the one that was successful for him at Florida. The problem is, he doesn't have the wealth of talent he had there.

Steele did a lot of shuffling during spring practice as he tackled the challenge of resurrecting a program that ranked last in the conference in both total offense and total defense last season. His blueprint has been shaped by what he learned while he was an assistant at Nebraska.

He even hired former Cornhusker quarterback Tommie Frazier as an assistant.

That the Bears won't be representing the South Division in the Big 12 playoff at the Alamodome in San Antonio on Dec. 4 is among the few certainties about the upcoming season.

A&M and Nebraska could be there. But much will happen before then. ■

New Coaches



Gary Barnett, Colorado

Age: 53

Replaced: Rick Neuheisel

Record as college head coach: 43-56-2

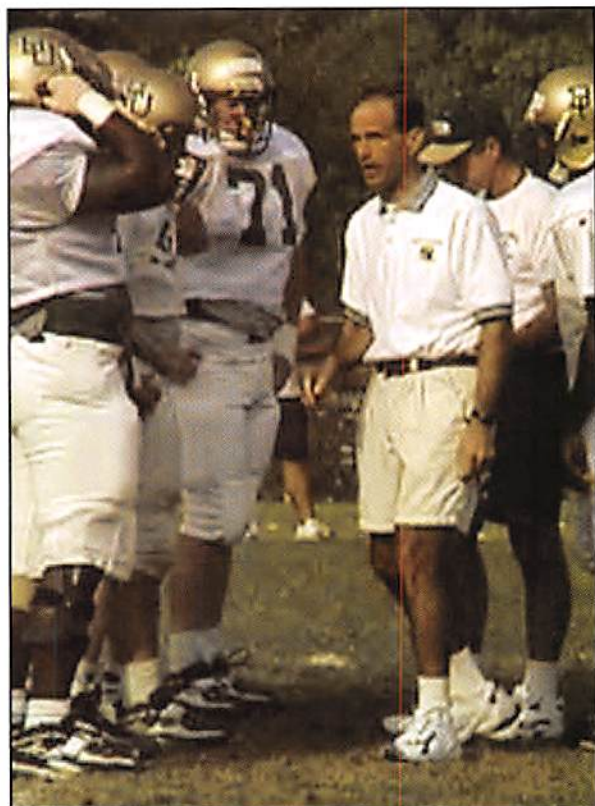
Education: University of Missouri, 1969.
Master's, Missouri, 1971.

Coaching experience

Head coach, Northwestern, 1992-1998

Assistant coach, Colorado, 1984-1991

Head coach, Fort Lewis College, 1982-83



Kevin Steele, Baylor

Age: 41

Replaced: Dave Roberts

Record as college head coach: 0-0

Education: University of Tennessee, 1981.

Coaching experience

Assistant coach, Carolina Panthers, 1995-1998

Assistant coach, Nebraska, 1989-1995

Assistant coach, Tennessee, 1987-1989

Assistant coach, Oklahoma State, 1984-1987

Assistant coach, New Mexico State, 1983-1984

Assistant coach, Tennessee, 1981-1983



Bob Stoops, Oklahoma

Age: 38

Replaced: John Blake

Record as college head coach: 0-0

Education: University of Iowa, 1983.

Coaching experience

Assistant coach, Florida, 1996-1998

Assistant coach, Kansas State, 1989-1995

Assistant coach, Kent State, 1988

Assistant coach, Iowa, 1983-1987

**Colorado****Iowa State****Kansas****Kansas State****Missouri****Nebraska**

Aug 28	@ Notre Dame*				
Sep 4	@ Colo. St.**	Indiana St.***		UAB	@ Iowa
Sep 11	San Jose St.	Iowa	CS-Northridge	UTEP	California
Sep 18	Kansas	@ UNLV	@ Colorado	Texas	W. Michigan
Sep 25	@ Washington	Kansas St.	San Diego St.	@ Iowa St.	Nebraska
Oct 2			SMU	@ Texas	@ Memphis
Oct 9	Missouri	@ Nebraska	@ Kansas St.	Kansas	@ Colorado
Oct 16	@ Texas Tech	@ Missouri	@ Texas A&M	Utah St.	Iowa St.
Oct 23	@ Iowa St.	Colorado	Missouri	@ Oklahoma St.	@ Kansas
Oct 30	Oklahoma	Texas	Nebraska	Baylor	Texas Tech
Nov 6	@ Kansas St.	@ Texas Tech	Baylor	Colorado	@ Oklahoma
Nov 13	@ Baylor	Oklahoma	@ Oklahoma St.	@ Nebraska	Texas A&M
Nov 20		@ Kansas	Iowa St.	@ Missouri	@ Kansas St.
Nov 26	@ Nebraska				@ Colorado

1999 BIG 12 SCHEDULES

**Baylor****Oklahoma****Oklahoma State****Texas****Texas A&M****Texas Tech**

Aug 28				N. Carolina St.***	
Sep 4	@ Boston Coll.		SW Louisiana	Stanford	@ Louisiana Tech
Sep 11	UNLV	Indiana St.	Tulsa	@ Rutgers	
Sep 18	@ Oklahoma	Baylor	@ Miss. St.	Rice	Tulsa
Sep 25	Texas	@ Louisville		@ Baylor	North Texas
Oct 2	North Texas	@ Notre Dame	@ Nebraska	Kansas St.	@ Texas Tech
Oct 9	@ Texas A&M	Texas****	Texas Tech	Oklahoma****	Baylor
Oct 16				Kansas	Colorado
Oct 23	Texas Tech	Texas A&M	Kansas St.	Nebraska	@ Oklahoma
Oct 30	@ Kansas St.	@ Colorado	@ Texas A&M	@ Iowa St.	Oklahoma St.
Nov 6	@ Kansas	Missouri	Texas	@ Oklahoma St.	@ Nebraska
Nov 13	Colorado	@ Iowa St.	Kansas	Texas Tech	@ Missouri
Nov 20	Oklahoma St.	@ Texas Tech	@ Baylor		Oklahoma
Nov 27		Oklahoma St.	@ Oklahoma	@ Texas A&M*****	Texas*****

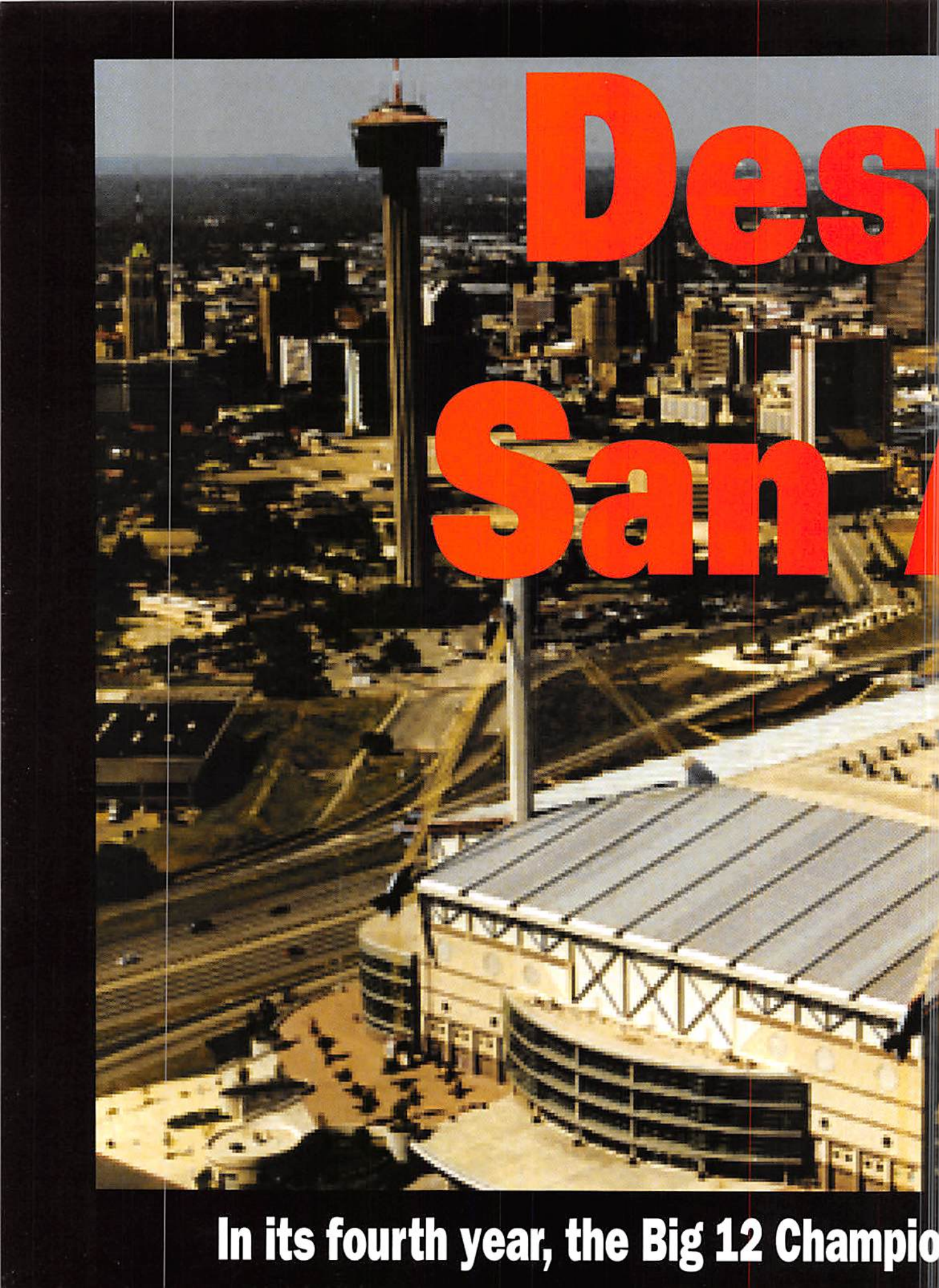
*Eddie Robinson Classic

**Thursday, Sept. 2

***Black Coaches Association Classic

****Cotton Bowl • Dallas, Texas

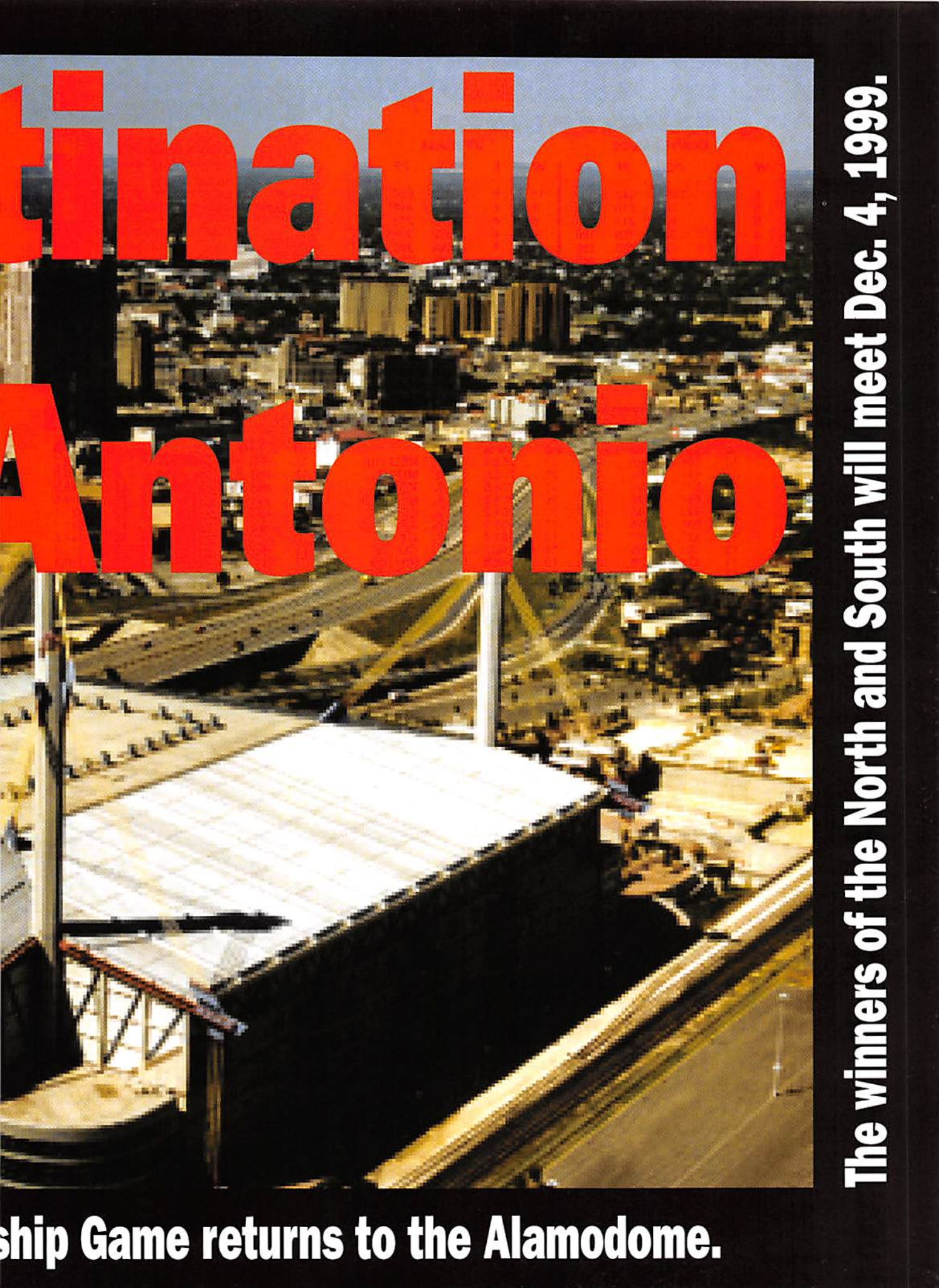
*****Friday, Nov. 26

An aerial photograph of the University of Utah campus. In the foreground, a large, modern building with a curved, tiered structure and a flat roof is visible. Behind it, a tall, slender tower rises above the city skyline. The background shows a dense urban area with various buildings and streets. The word "Des" is written in large, bold, red letters across the upper right portion of the image.

Des

San

In its fourth year, the Big 12 Champion

An aerial photograph of San Antonio, Texas, featuring the Alamodome in the foreground. The stadium's white, ribbed roof is prominent, and the surrounding cityscape, including highways and various buildings, is visible in the background under a clear sky.

Destination San Antonio

The winners of the North and South will meet Dec. 4, 1999.

Ship Game returns to the Alamodome.

In Review 1998 Season

FINAL STANDINGS

CONFERENCE						OVERALL				
	W	L	PCT.	PF	PA	W	L	PCT.	PF	PA
North Division										
Kansas State	8	0	1.000	342	110	11	2	.846	610	197
Nebraska	5	3	.625	210	139	9	4	.692	403	206
Missouri	5	3	.625	214	160	8	4	.667	334	236
Colorado	4	4	.500	155	169	8	4	.667	302	253
Kansas	1	7	.125	155	269	4	7	.364	280	341
Iowa State	1	7	.125	135	288	3	8	.273	221	328
South Division										
Texas A&M	7	1	.875	191	112	11	3	.786	335	214
Texas	6	2	.750	243	220	9	3	.750	437	357
Texas Tech	4	4	.500	198	189	7	5	.583	315	255
Oklahoma State	3	5	.375	197	218	5	6	.455	303	296
Oklahoma	3	5	.375	125	198	5	6	.455	184	230
Baylor	1	7	.125	142	239	2	9	.182	195	323

TEAM STATISTICS

(National rankings in parentheses)

RUSHING OFFENSE

	G	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	YPG
1. NU (6)	12	636	3045	4.8	37	253.8
2. MU (9)	11	546	2552	4.7	28	232.0
3. KSU (12)	12	571	2699	4.7	42	224.9
4. OSU (19)	11	550	2249	4.1	26	204.5
5. UT (21)	11	444	2246	5.1	30	204.2
6. TT (24)	11	535	2219	4.1	17	201.7
7. OU (34)	11	527	2017	3.8	10	183.4
8. A&M (54)	13	594	1985	3.3	21	152.7
9. KU (60)	11	428	1638	3.8	19	148.9
10. ISU (81)	11	394	1417	3.6	14	128.8
11. CU (88)	11	453	1355	3.0	10	123.2
12. BAY (99)	11	439	1214	2.6	14	110.4

PASSING OFFENSE

	G	AT	CP	IT	PCT	YDS	YPA	TD	YPG
1. UT (19)	11	318	188	12	59.1	2931	9.2	19	266.5
2. KSU (23)	12	316	179	5	56.6	3043	9.6	23	253.6
3. ISU (58)	11	365	183	21	50.1	2275	6.2	14	206.8
4. TT (65)	11	286	151	10	52.8	2230	7.8	15	202.7
5. CU (66)	11	306	173	8	56.5	2226	7.3	15	202.4
6. KU (81)	11	270	133	9	49.3	1879	7.0	9	170.8
7. BAY (85)	11	292	151	14	51.7	1831	6.3	4	166.5
8. OSU (86)	11	246	124	7	50.4	1783	7.2	10	162.1
9. A&M (87)	13	262	137	5	52.3	2071	7.9	15	159.3
10. NU (98)	12	208	118	5	56.7	1574	7.6	7	131.2
11. MU (102)	11	187	88	5	47.1	1298	6.9	9	118.0
12. OU (107)	11	183	79	16	43.2	1209	6.6	9	109.9

TOTAL OFFENSE

	G	PLYS	YDS	AVG	TD	YPG
1. KSU (9)	12	887	5742	6.5	65	478.50
2. UT (11)	11	762	5177	6.8	49	470.64
3. TT (29)	11	821	4449	5.4	32	404.45
4. NU (39)	12	844	4619	5.5	44	384.92
5. OSU (58)	11	796	4032	5.1	36	366.55
6. MU (69)	11	733	3850	5.3	37	350.00
7. ISU (73)	11	759	3692	4.9	28	335.64
8. CU (81)	11	759	3581	4.7	25	325.55
9. KU (85)	11	698	3517	5.0	28	319.73
10. A&M (91)	13	856	4056	4.7	36	312.00
11. OU (101)	11	710	3226	4.5	19	293.27
12. BAY (106)	11	731	3045	4.2	18	276.82

SCORING OFFENSE

	G	PTS	AVG	TD	K	P	K	P	FG	SF
1. KSU (1)	12	576	48.0	73	70	1	0	0	22	0
2. UT (11)	11	399	36.3	49	47	0	0	0	16	1
3. NU (23)	12	383	31.9	49	47	0	0	0	14	0
4. OSU (42)	11	303	27.5	37	32	2	0	0	15	0
5. MU (43)	11	300	27.3	42	34	1	0	0	4	0
6. TT (46)	11	297	27.0	34	28	4	0	0	19	0
7. KU (51)	11	280	25.5	35	28	3	0	0	12	0
8. A&M (55)	13	321	24.7	39	31	4	0	0	16	0
9. CU (68)	11	251	22.8	29	23	1	0	0	16	2
10. ISU (88)	11	221	20.1	28	24	1	0	0	9	0
11. BAY (100)	11	195	17.7	23	19	0	0	0	12	1
12. OU (101)	11	184	16.7	21	16	0	0	0	14	0

POSTSEASON ACTION

Big 12 Championship Game Texas A&M 36, Kansas St. 33 (2ot)
Jeep Aloha Bowl Colorado 51, Oregon 43
Insight.Com Bowl Missouri 34, West Virginia 31
Builders Square Alamo Bowl Purdue 37, Kansas State 34
Culligan Holiday Bowl Arizona 23, Nebraska 20
Sanford Independence Bowl Mississippi 35, Texas Tech 18
Southwestern Bell Cotton Bowl Texas 38, Mississippi State 11
Nokia Sugar Bowl Ohio State 24, Texas A&M 14

RUSHING DEFENSE

	G	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	YPG
1. KSU (10)	12	433	1179	2.7	3	98.3
2. NU (16)	12	466	1402	3.0	8	116.8
3. TT (18)	11	454	1308	2.9	11	118.9
4. OSU (20)	11	409	1314	3.2	14	119.5
5. OU (21)	11	429	1332	3.1	12	121.1
6. A&M (22)	13	497	1582	3.2	11	121.7
7. UT (45)	11	465	1578	3.4	19	143.5
8. CU (49)	11	450	1623	3.6	16	147.5
9. MU (63)	11	451	1761	3.9	12	160.1
10. BAY (98)	11	490	2355	4.8	25	214.1
11. ISU (103)	11	521	2431	4.7	27	221.0
12. KU (107)	11	560	2592	4.6	32	235.6

PASS EFFICIENCY DEFENSE

	G	ATT	CMP	YDS	TD	INT	PTS
1. CU (4)	11	290	138	1633	4	11	91.9
2. KSU (9)	12	326	141	2041	15	16	101.2
3. A&M (15)	13	374	208	2179	10	15	105.4
4. MU (27)	11	270	155	1686	8	13	110.0
5. OU (29)	11	265	125	1735	12	9	110.3
6. KU (33)	11	239	123	1670	8	12	111.2
7. NU (34)	12	347	174	2362	13	14	111.6
8. TT (39)	11	256	125	1827	10	10	113.9
9. BAY (74)	11	291	147	2499	13	10	130.5
10. OSU (80)	11	285	147	2315	19	14	132.0
11. UT (92)	11	295	153	2430	20	7	138.7
12. ISU (95)	11	230	126	1983	13	5	141.5

TOTAL DEFENSE

	G	PLYS	YDS	AVG	TD	YPG
1. KSU (3)	12	759	3220	4.2	18	268.3
2. OU (6)	11	694	3067	4.4	21	278.8
3. TT (8)	11	710	3135	4.4	16	285.0
4. A&M (10)	13	871	3761	4.3	21	289.3
5. CU (13)	11	740	3256	4.4	20	296.0
6. MU (21)	11	721	3447	4.8	20	313.4
7. NU (22)	12	813	3764	4.6	21	313.7
8. OSU (29)	11	694	3629	5.2	33	329.9
9. UT (56)	11	760	4008	5.3	39	364.4
10. KU (70)	11	799	4262	5.3	40	387.5
11. ISU (86)	11	751	4414	5.9	40	401.3
12. BAY (101)	11	781	4854	6.2	38	441.3

SCORING DEFENSE

	G	PTS	AVG	TD	KXP	OKP	FG	SF
1. KSU (6)	12	160	13.3	19	11	1	11	0
2. A&M (10)	13	190	14.6	21	19	0	15	0
3. NU (11)	12	183	15.3	24	19	1	6	0
4. MU (22)	11	205	18.6	21	14	4	19	0
5. CU (24)	11	210	19.1	24	19	1	15	0
6. TT (30)	11	220	20.0	25	22	0	16	0
7. OU (36)	11	229	20.8	28	18	2	13	0
8. OSU (60)	11	296	26.9	38	33	1	11	0
9. BAY (81)	11	323	29.4	40	37	3	12	2
10. UT (83)	11	326	29.6	42	32	3	12	0
11. ISU (85)	11	328	29.8	43	40	1	8	0
12. KU (92)	11	341	31.0	43	41	0	14	0

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

(National rankings in parentheses/ 1998 returners italicized)

RUSHING

Player, School, Class (Ranking)	G	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	YPG
1. Ricky Williams, UT, Sr. (1)	11	361	2124	5.9	27	193.09
2. Ricky Williams, TT, So. (4)	11	306	1582	5.2	13	143.82
3. Devin West, MU, Sr. (5)	11	283	1578	5.6	17	143.45
4. Darren Davis, ISU, Jr. (22)	11	294	1166	4.0	7	106.00
5. De'mond Parker, OU, Jr. (33)	11	204	1077	5.3	5	97.91
6. David Winbush, KU, So. (45)	11	209	974	4.7	9	88.55
7. Nathan Simmons, OSU, Jr. (49)	11	204	937	4.6	5	85.18
8. Eric Hickson, KSU, Sr.	11	169	902	5.3	9	82.00
9. Danto Hall, A&M, Jr.	13	243	1024	4.2	8	78.77
10. Corroll Buckhalter, NU, So.	12	142	799	5.6	8	66.58
11. Michael Bishop, KSU, Sr.	12	177	748	4.2	14	62.33
12. Tony Lindsay, OSU, So.	11	151	593	3.9	10	53.91

PASSING EFFICIENCY

(Min. Five Attempts Per Game)									
Player, School, Class (Ranking)	G	AT	CP	PCT	I	YDS	TD	RATING	PTS
1. Michael Bishop, KSU, Sr. (6)	12	295	164	55.59	4	2844	23	159.6	
2. Major Applewhite, UT, Fr. (15)	11	273	158	58.24	11	2453	18	147.4	
3. Matt Tittle, TT, Jr.	10	103	55	53.40	6	961	6	139.3	
4. Mike Moschetti, CU, Jr. (30)	11	276	162	58.70	7	2104	15	135.6	
5. Randy McCown, A&M, Jr.	12	130	66	50.77	3	1025	6	127.6	
6. Rob Peters, TT, Jr. (44)	10	183	96	52.46	4	1269	9	122.6	
7. Corby Jones, MU, Sr. (50)	11	178	87	48.88	5	1281	9	120.4	
8. Tony Lindsay, OSU, So.	11	196	97	49.49	6	1442	7	117.0	
9. Zac Wegner, KU, Jr.	10	186	91	48.92	6	1367	7	116.6	
10. Todd Bandhauer, ISU, Sr.	11	355	179	50.42	20	2206	14	104.4	
11. Jermaine Alford, BAY, Jr.	11	188	97	51.60	7	1268	2	104.3	
12. Jake Sills, OU, Fr.	11	83	39	46.99	6	502	5	103.2	

RECEPTIONS PER GAME

Player, School, Class (Ranking)	G	CT	YDS	TD	CPG	YPC
1. Dar. McDonald, KSU, Sr. (19)	12	75	1092	9	6.25	14.56
2. Wane McGarity, UT, Sr. (43)	11	58	1087	9	5.27	18.74
3. Darrin Chivaverini, CU, Sr.	11	52	630	5	4.73	12.12
4. Kwame Cavil, UT, So.	11	51	775	3	4.64	15.20
5. Donnie Hart, TT, Sr.	11	48	871	7	4.36	18.15
6. Damian Groce, ISU, Jr.	11	47	640	7	4.27	13.62
7. Chris Anthony, ISU, Fr.	11	42	490	2	3.82	11.67
8. Aaron Lockett, KSU, Fr.	12	44	928	6	3.67	21.09
9. Javon Green, CU, So.	11	39	539	4	3.55	13.82
10. Morris Anderson, BAY, Sr.	11	37	639	3	3.36	17.27
10. Derek Lagway, BAY, So.	11	37	266	0	3.36	7.19
12. Brand. Thompson, BAY, So.	11	33	478	1	3.00	14.48

ALL-PURPOSE RUNNERS

Player, School, Class (Ranking)	G	RUN	REC	PR	KO	YDS	YPG
1. Ricky Williams, UT, Sr. (2)	11	2124	262	0	0	2386	216.91
2. Ricky Williams, TT, So. (12)	11	1582	176	0	0	1758	159.82
3. Devin West, MU, Sr. (16)	11	1578	43	0	0	1621	147.36
4. De'mond Parker, OU, Jr. (33)	11	1077	176	0	198	1451	131.91
5. Darren Davis, ISU, Jr. (43)	11	1166	242	0	0	1408	128.00
6. David Winbush, KU, So.	11	974	75	0	146	1195	108.64
7. Danto Hall, A&M, Jr.	13	1024	92	28	172	1316	101.23
8. Jamaal Fobbs, OSU, So.	10	408	60	0	534	1002	100.20
9. Wane McGarity, UT, Sr.	11	0	1087	0	0	1087	98.82
10. Mitch Bowles, KU, Jr.	11	438	223	0	377	1038	94.36
11. Nathan Simmons, OSU, Jr.	11	937	97	0	0	1034	94.00
12. Eric Hickson, KSU, Sr.	11	902	93	0	15	1010	91.82

RECEIVING YARDS PER GAME

Player, School, Class (Ranking)	G	CT	YDS	TD	YPG	CPG	YPC
1. Wane McGarity, UT, Sr. (20)	11	58	1087	9	98.82	5.27	18.74
2. Da. McDonald, KSU, Sr. (24)	12	75	1092	9	91.00	6.24	14.56
3. Dannie Hart, TT, Sr. (39)	11	48	871	7	79.18	4.36	18.15
4. Aaron Lockett, KSU, Fr.	12	44	928	6	77.33	3.67	21.09
5. Kwame Cavil, UT, So.	11	51	775	3	70.45	4.64	15.20
6. Damian Groce, ISU, Jr.	11	47	640	7	58.18	4.27	13.62
7. Morris Anderson, BAY, Sr.	11	37	639	3	58.09	3.36	17.27
8. Darrin Chivaverini, CU, Sr.	11	52	630	5	57.27	4.73	12.12
9. Chris Colo, A&M, Jr.	13	38	667	5	51.31	2.92	17.55
10. Javon Green, CU, So.	11	39	539	4	49.00	3.55	13.82
11. Tormaine Fulton, KU, So.	11	25	503	3	45.73	2.27	20.12
12. Kent Layman, MU, Jr.	11	26	495	2	45.00	2.36	19.04

TOTAL OFFENSE

Player, School, Class (Ranking)	G	RUSH		PASS		TOTAL	
		AT	YDS	AT	YDS	YDS	YPG
1. Michael Bishop, KSU, Sr. (10)	12	177	748	295	2844	3592	299.33
2. Major Applewhite, UT, Fr. (32)	11	33	-63	273	2453	2390	217.27
3. Todd Bandhauer, ISU, Sr. (48)	11	28	-39	355	2206	2167	197.00
4. Ricky Williams, UT, Sr.	11	361	2124	2	0	2124	193.09
5. Mike Moschetti, CU, Jr.	11	101	-55	276	2104	2049	186.27
6. Tony Lindsay, OSU, So.	11	151	593	196	1442	2035	185.00
7. Corby Jones, MU, Sr.	11	168	536	178	1281	1817	165.18
8. Ricky Williams, TT, So.	11	306	1582	0	0	1582	143.82
9. Devin West, MU, Sr.	11	283	1578	1	0	1578	143.45
10. Rob Peters, TT, Jr.	10	105	125	183	1269	1394	139.40
11. Zac Wegner, KU, Jr.	10	39	-24	186	1367	1343	134.30
12. Jermaine Alford, BAY, Jr.	11	33	-63	188	1268	1205	109.55

SCORING

Player, School, Class (Ranking)	G	TD	XP	FG	PTS	PTPG
1. Ricky Williams, UT, Sr. (2)	11	28	0	0	168	15.27
2. Martin Gramatica, KSU, Sr. (3)	12	0	69	22	135	11.25
3. Devin West, MU, Sr. (9)	11	18	0	0	108	9.82
4. Kris Stockton, UT, So. (18)	11	0	46	16	94	8.55
5. Kris Brown, NU, Sr. (43)	12	0	47	14	89	7.42
6. Ricky Williams, TT, So.	11	13	0	0	78	7.09
7. Michael Bishop, KSU, Sr.	12	14	0	0	84	7.00
7. Tim Sydnos, OSU, Jr.	11	0	32	15	77	7.00
9. Chris Birkholz, TT, So.	11	0	23	16	71	6.45
10. Jeremy Aldrich, CU, Jr.	11	0	22	16	70	6.36
11. Russell Bynum, A&M, So.	13	0	30	16	78	6.00
11. Corby Jones, MU, Sr.	11	11	0	0	66	6.00

INTERCEPTIONS

Player, School, Class (Ranking)	G	NO	YDS	TD	IPG
1. Wade Perkins, MU, Sr. (5)	11	6	129	1	.55
2. Gary Baxter, BAY, So. (37)	11	4	87	0	.36
2. Harold Piersey, MU, Sr. (37)	11	4	12	0	.36
2. Ben Kelly, CU, So. (37)	11	4	1	0	.36
2. Cory Ivy, OU, Sr. (37)	11	4	0	0	.36
6. Clint Finley, NU, So.	9	3	63	1	.33
6. Muhammad Abdul-Rahim, KU, Jr.	9	3	5	1	.33
8. Brandon Jennings, A&M, Jr.	13	4	4	0	.31
9. Joe Walker, NU, So.	12	3	65	1	.25
9. Jeff Kelly, KSU, Sr.	12	3	18	1	.25
11. Rich Coady, A&M, Sr.	13	3	16	0	.23
11. Sodrick Curry, A&M, Jr.	13	3	10	0	.23

1998 FIRST-TEAM ALL-BIG 12 FOOTBALL

(Selections were unanimous Big 12 Coaches and Associated Press unless noted 1999 returners in bold/1998 classification shown)

OFFENSE

WR	Darnell McDonald, Sr., Kansas St.
WR	Wayne McGarity, Sr., Texas
TE	Sheldon Jackson, Sr., Nebraska (AP)
TE	Derek Lewis, Sr., Texas (C)
OL	Ryan Young, Sr., Kansas St.
OL	Rob Riti, Jr., Missouri
OL	Craig Heimburger, Sr., Missouri
OL	Josh Heskew, Sr., Nebraska
OL	Ben Adams, Sr., Texas (AP)
OL	Jay Humphrey, Sr., Texas
QB	Michael Bishop, Sr., Kansas State
RB	Devin West, Sr., Missouri
RB	Ricky Williams, Sr., Texas
PK	Martin Gramatica, Sr., Kansas St.
KR	David Allen, So., Kansas St. (AP)
KR	Ben Kelly, So., Colorado (C)

DEFENSE

DE	Darren Howard, Jr., Kansas State
DE	Montae Reagor, Sr., Texas Tech
IL	Kelly Gregg, Sr., Oklahoma
IL	Justin Wyatt, Sr., Missouri (C)
IL	Taurus Rucker, Jr., Texas Tech (C)
LB	Jeff Kelly, Sr., Kansas State
LB	Dat Nguyen, Sr., Texas A&M
LB	Mark Simoneau, Jr., Kansas St. (AP)
LB	Warrick Holdman, Sr., Texas A&M
DB	Ralph Brown, Jr., Nebraska
DB	Jarrod Cooper, So., Kansas St.
DB	Harold Piersey, Sr., Missouri
DB	Rich Coady, Sr., Texas A&M (AP)
DB	Lamar Chapman, Jr., Kansas St. (C)
P	Shane Lechler, Jr., Texas A&M
PR	David Allen, Jr., Kansas St.

SPECIALTY HONORS

Coach of the Year
Bill Snyder, KSU

Offensive
Player of the Year
Ricky Williams, UT

Defensive
Player of the Year
Dat Nguyen, A&M

Offensive
Newcomer of the Year
Mike Moschetti, CU

Defensive
Newcomer of the Year
Jesse Beckom, ISU

Offensive
Freshman of the Year
Major Applewhite, UT

Defensive
Freshman of the Year
Justin Smith, MU

BIG 12 BREAKDOWN

SELECTING A PRESEASON All-BIG 12 FIRST TEAM is difficult because, well, there are 12 teams from which to choose, which means there are many deserving players who get left off.

For example, Kansas State free safety Lamar Chapman was a first-team pick by the conference coaches and a second-team pick by the Associated Press in 1998. Yet he gets left off in favor of teammate Jarrod Cooper, Texas A&M's Jason Webster and Nebraska's Ralph Brown and Mike Brown.

And there are other quality defensive backs in the conference, among them Colorado's Ben Kelly and Damen Wheeler, Oklahoma's Mike Woods and Baylor's Gary Baxter.

The versatile Kelly, whom new Buffaloes head coach Gary Barnett also used at wide receiver in spring practice, is included as a kick returner, edging out Nebraska's equally versatile Joe Walker.

Or what about running back? Oklahoma State's Nathan Simmons could easily be included on the first team, but whom would he replace, Iowa State's Darren Davis or Texas Tech's Ricky Williams?

In addition, there is David Winbush of Kansas, who just missed rushing for 1,000 yards last season, and if he is finally healthy, Nebraska's DeAngelo Evans could contend for post-season honors.

Colorado's Mike Moschetti gets the call at quarterback, with no disrespect intended toward Oklahoma State's talented Tony Lindsay or Texas's young Major Applewhite.

Among the many others whose names might well have appeared on this first team are Baylor offensive lineman Jonathan Gray, Kansas State defensive lineman Damion McIntosh, Colorado offensive lineman Brad Bedell, Nebraska linebacker Eric Johnson . . . OK, you can see how difficult this is.

And that's not even taking into account having to decide such things as whether to include three defensive linemen and four linebackers or four defensive linemen and three linebackers, three running backs and one wide receiver or two running backs and two wide receivers.

Oh yes, and there isn't a fullback on this team, even though Huskers Illustrated acknowledges the importance of that position in many of the offenses run by conference teams.

Obviously, it would be easier to select teams for the north and south divisions, but even then deserving players would have to be excluded. So keeping all of these things in mind, here it is: ■

HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED PRESEASON ALL-BIG 12 TEAM

OFFENSE

WR	Kwame Kavil, Jr., Texas
WR	Damien Groce, Sr., Iowa State
TE	Kyle Allamon, Sr., Texas Tech
OL	Rob Riti, Sr., Missouri
OL	R. Johanningmeier, Sr., Colorado
OL	Seth McKinney, So., Texas A&M
OL	Russ Hochstein, Jr., Nebraska
OL	Adam Davis, Sr., Oklahoma St.
QB	Mike Moschetti, Sr., Colorado
RB	Darren Davis, Sr., Iowa St.
RB	Ricky Williams, Jr., Texas Tech
PK	Jeremy Aldrich, Sr., Colorado
KR	Ben Kelly, Jr., Colorado

DEFENSE

DL	Darren Howard, Jr., Kansas St.
DL	Justin Smith, So., Missouri
DL	Taurus Rucker, Sr., Texas Tech
DL	Casey Hampton, Jr., Texas
LB	Fred Jones, Sr., Colorado
LB	Mark Simoneau, Sr., Kansas St.
LB	Kenyatta Wright, Sr., Oklahoma St.
DB	Ralph Brown, Sr., Nebraska
DB	Mike Brown, Sr., Nebraska
DB	Jarrod Cooper, Jr., Kansas St.
DB	Jason Webster, Sr., Texas A&M
P	Shane Lechler, Sr., Texas A&M
PR	David Allen, Jr., Kansas St.

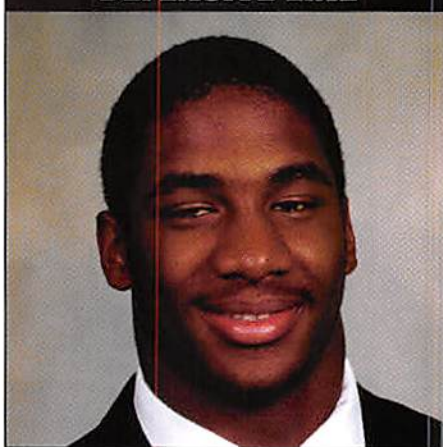
QUARTERBACK



Colorado's **MIKE MOSCHETTI**

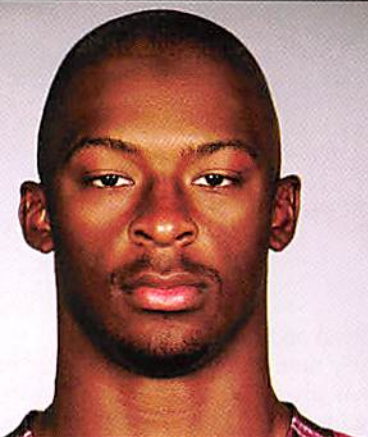
CU	Offense perfect for Moschetti.
OSU	Lindsay might be the best.
UT	Pressure on Air Applewhite.
NU	Double-trouble for Husker foes.
A&M	Fiery McCown is healthy.
TT	Peters gets a thumbs-up.
KSU	Beasley is no Bishop.
MU	Either Dougherty or Farmer.
BAY	Time for James to take charge.
ISU	More options, fewer passes.
KU	Mr. Smith comes to Lawrence.
OU	Hopes rest with Heupel.

DEFENSIVE LINE



Kansas State's **DARREN HOWARD**

KSU	Howard harasses quarterbacks.
MU	Smith another Wistrom.
NU	Rush ends have high profile.
UT	Humphrey, Woodard among best.
A&M	Better this spring than last.
OSU	Quicker and more athletic.
CU	Must improve against the run.
TT	Rucker steps up to lead.
OU	"Press" defense begins up front.
ISU	Hayward labors anonymously.
KU	At least everyone returns.
BAY	Weak link in new 4-3 alignment.

RUNNING BACK**Texas A&M's DANTE HALL**

A&M	Some big ones with Hall.
TT	Another Ricky emerges.
ISU	More than just Davis.
OSU	Healthy Simmons a must.
NU	Should be three-deep.
KU	Small but mighty tandem.
KSU	Versatile Allen gets a shot.
CU	Plan is 25 carries a game.
MU	Carries spread around.
UT	Alas, no more Williams.
OU	Able but untested.
BAY	Bush, Burkins small but mighty

LINEBACKER**Oklahoma State's KENYATTA WRIGHT**

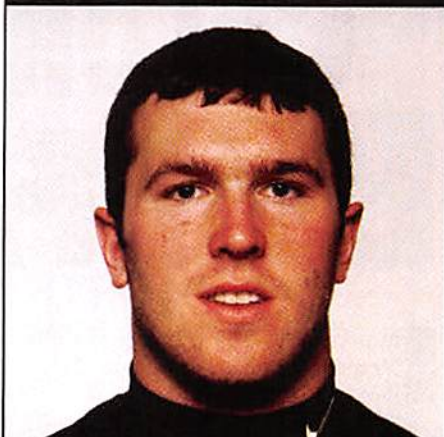
OSU	All the Wright moves.
NU	Two-deep on the outside.
KSU	Simoneau gets new mates.
OU	Maybe as good as K-State in '98.
UT	Rotation could include Redding.
A&M	No more Nguyen.
TT	Strength of the defense.
MU	Robinson a big-play backer.
CU	Jones is the man outside.
BAY	Smith springs forward.
ISU	Beckom no longer unknown.
KU	All new starters.

RECEIVER**Colorado's MARCUS STIGGERS**

CU	Bufs game-breakers all.
A&M	Plenty of Aggie speed.
UT	Cavil has the spotlight.
KU	Jayhawks' top eight return.
ISU	Groce, Anthony and more.
OSU	32 yards/catch for Howell.
KSU	Lockett's size no problem.
MU	More action their way.
NU	Blocking is the key.
OU	Someone needs to catch.
TT	Allamon, untested otherwise.
BAY	Track team help in order.

SECONDARY**Nebraska's RALPH BROWN**

NU	More than Brown & Brown.
CU	Could be the best, actually.
KSU	Cooper an All-American candidate.
A&M	Coady will be missed at safety.
MU	Jones came up big in bowl.
UT	Freshmen will get a look.
BAY	Baxter 18 breakups, 4 INTs.
OSU	Prize recruit Massey could help.
OU	One-on-one cover challenge.
TT	Uncertainty at corner.
ISU	Waters made 93 tackles in '98.
KU	Starting spots up for grabs.

OFFENSIVE LINE**Colorado's Ryan Johanningmeier**

CU	Big, strong, experienced.
A&M	McKinney just a sophomore.
NU	Huskers should be back on-line.
MU	Riti provides strong foundation.
OSU	Three new starters with Davis.
TT	Having a "House" helps.
KSU	McIntosh could play at times.
ISU	Starters return everywhere.
OU	Experience a Sooner plus.
KU	Hunt has 27 consecutive starts.
UT	Horns must rebuild completely.
BAY	Considerable spring shuffling.

KICKING GAME**Colorado's JEREMY ALDRICH**

CU	Punting could improve.
KSU	Rheem replaces Gramatica.
A&M	All-American Lechler not leg weary.
TT	Birkholtz has earned a scholarship.
UT	Stockton might focus on kicking.
BAY	Atteberry might have to double up.
NU	New kicker named Brown.
OSU	Sydney hit on 15-of-18.
ISU	Gomez has 40.2 career average.
KU	Punting must improve.
OU	Sooner sore spot again.
MU	Kicked away three games.

COLORADO BUFFALOES

Immediately after arriving at Colorado to replace Rick Neuheisel as head football coach, Gary Barnett resurrected the Buffaloes' designated rivalry with Nebraska.

"The 'former' Nebraska rivalry will be important to us," Barnett said in early February. "When I was here, that game was a rivalry, and I never lost sight of that rivalry."

The "rivalry" wasn't exactly steeped in tradition, however. It only dated to Bill McCartney's tenure (1982-94) as head coach and was one-sided. Nebraska never really bought into it.

McCartney, for whom Barnett was an assistant from 1984 to 1991, created the rivalry as a means of motivating his players, and depending on one's point of view, it worked. Colorado, which hadn't defeated the Cornhuskers since 1967, won in 1986 and again in 1989 and 1990.

The teams tied in 1991. But the Buffaloes haven't won since.

Neuheisel discontinued using "rival" when referring to Nebraska, and the Cornhuskers were no longer a red-letter date on Colorado's schedule during his four seasons in Boulder.

Now the rivalry is back, as part of Barnett's plan to revitalize a program from which an often beleaguered Neuheisel was lured by Washington — with a \$1 million contract.

Barnett, who was lured from Northwestern, would seem a natural for the Colorado job. His roots in the state are deep. In addition to the eight years spent as McCartney's assistant, he coached at Air Force Academy High School in Colorado Springs and at Fort Lewis College in Durango.

"The decision to come back to Colorado was easy, because it's home," said Barnett. "It's been a dream. I have to pinch myself when I look around here. The decision was made from the heart."

He was the first choice as Neuheisel's successor. The problem was a \$250,000 buyout provision in his contract with Northwestern. It wasn't until Denver Broncos offensive coordinator Gary Kubiak turned down the job that the

buyout problem was resolved and Barnett was hired.

Barnett isn't wasting any time in implementing his plan for the program, which has produced eight or more victories and played in bowl games in 10 of the last 11 seasons. But the Buffaloes last won or shared the conference title in 1991, one season after winning a national championship.

"I've come here to play my part in the RTD of Colorado football. That's 'return to dominance,'" Barnett said. "The primary goal is to start that return immediately."

During spring practice, he set about installing a ball-control, West Coast offense, which he expects also to provide a big-play threat, and he began adapting the defensive schemes.

Colorado ranked fifth in the conference and 13th nationally in total defense last season. The lowest defensive rankings, eighth and 50th, were in rushing defense.

Six of Colorado's 17 returning starters (including both kickers) play defense, among them versatile junior cornerback Ben Kelly, who also was tried at wide receiver during the spring.

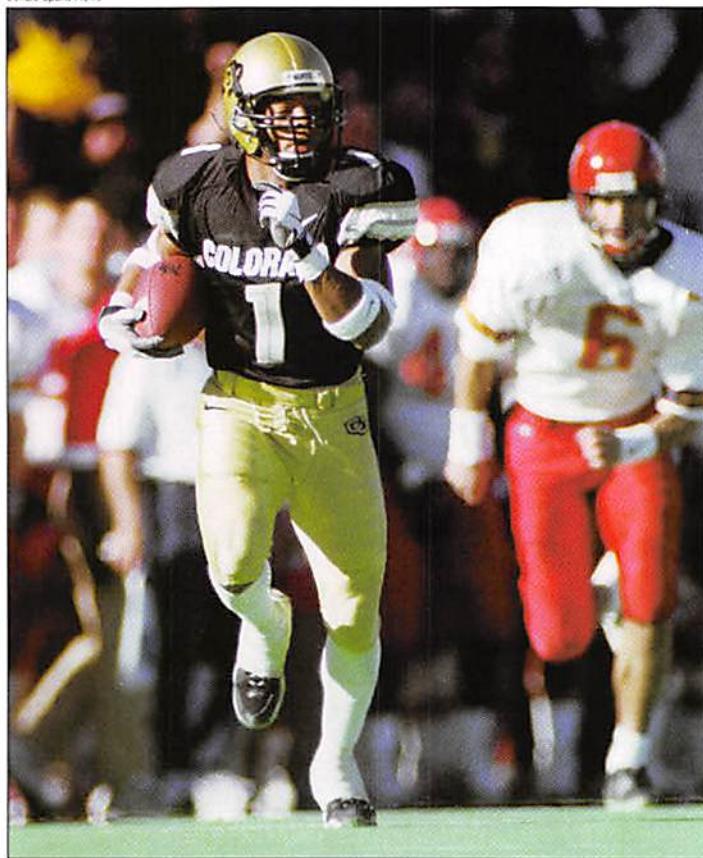
Kelly was a first-team all-conference selection as a defensive back and kick returner last season, intercepting four passes in addition to breaking up a school-record 22 passes. Senior Damen Wheeler, the other cornerback, broke up 17 passes.

Kelly and Wheeler were key elements of a secondary that contributed to Colorado's being ranked first in the Big 12 and fourth nationally in passing defense. The Buffaloes allowed only four touchdown passes, while intercepting 11. Opponents completed just 47.6 percent of their passes.

Even though the career of John Sanders, who started the final nine games as a sophomore and was outstanding at strong safety in an Aloha Bowl game victory against Oregon, apparently is over because of a medical reason, the Buffaloes should again be solid in the secondary.

Sophomore Albus Brooks, who started at strongside linebacker, has moved to strong safety, joining sophomore

Buffalo Sports News



Versatile junior cornerback Ben Kelly returned two punts for touchdowns.

Michael Lewis to help fill the void created by the loss of Sanders, and senior Rashidi Barnes, who was hampered last season by a torn PCL, is an experienced free safety.

The other returning starters on defense are senior rush end-outside linebacker Fred Jones, junior end Brady McDonnell and sophomore nose tackle Justin Bannan.

Senior Jesse Warren, who was credited with 5.5 sacks, and junior Sean Jarne are experienced tackles. Junior Ty Gregorak and sophomore Jashon Sykes, who started four of the last five games, are experienced inside linebackers.

As much as anyone, senior quarterback Mike Moschetti has welcomed Barnett's West Coast offense. The Big 12 coaches' "Offensive Newcomer of the Year" was sacked 38 times and sidelined by injuries in four games. He played the second half of the season with a cracked rib.

Despite constant pressure, the 6-foot, 195-pound Moschetti completed 162-of-276 passes (58.7 percent) for 2,104 yards and 15 touchdowns, with only seven interceptions.

Junior wide receiver Javon Green, Moschetti's favorite target, returns. Green caught at least one pass in every game, finishing with 39 for 539 yards and four touchdowns. Senior Marcus Stiggers added 17 catches.

Neuheisel vowed to improve the running game but never quite succeeded. Colorado ranked next-to-last in the conference and 88th in the nation in rushing offense, averaging 123.2 yards per game.

Barnett has indicated he would like the tailback, whether senior Dwayne Cherrington, junior

Ryan Johanningmeier, who moved from tackle to guard in the spring, is touted as an Outland Trophy and Lombardi Award candidate.

Damion Barton or sophomore Cortlen Johnson, to get in a rhythm by carrying 25 times a game, something that happened four times in 1998.

If the offensive line remains healthy, it would be among the biggest and best in the Big 12. Offensive coordinator and line coach Tom Cable could put five starters who average 6-6 and 311 pounds on the field, and that doesn't include Chris Morgan, a returning starter at guard.

Senior Ryan Johanningmeier, who was moved from tackle to guard during the spring, is being promoted by the Colorado sports information office as an Outland Trophy and Lombardi Award candidate.

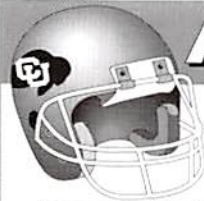
The other returning starters are senior guard Brad Bedell, senior tackle Shane Cook and sophomore center Andre Gurode. Bedell, a third-team All-Big 12 selection, was the only lineman who avoided major injuries.

Sophomore Victor Rogers, who was sidelined by knee and ankle surgery, is expected to step into the tackle position left open when Johanningmeier was moved.

Barnett appears to have sufficient talent for an immediate "return to dominance." The Buffaloes very well could be Nebraska's top challenger in the Big 12's north division this season. "We had enough guys show up this spring that indicate we can be a pretty dangerous team," he said. ■



Colorado Sports Information



At A GLANCE

PROJECTED 1999 FINISH:

STRENGTHS

The Buffs return nine starters on offense, including the entire offensive line and big-play wide receivers **Marcus Stiggers** and **Javon Green**. Throw in an outstanding kicking game with kicker **Jeremy Aldrich**, punter **Nick Pietsch** and kick returner **Ben Kelly**.

WEAKNESSES

Colorado was 11th in the conference and 88th nationally in rushing offense.

QUARTERBACK SETTLES IN

JUCO transfer **Mike Moschetti** finished fourth in the conference and 30th nationally in passing efficiency. He was named the Big 12 newcomer of the year after throwing for 2,104 yards and 15 touchdowns. New coach **Gary Barnett** described Moschetti as "the kinda guy you want next to you in a foxhole."

BACK TO BOULDER

Barnett was an assistant under **Bill McCartney** for eight seasons (1984-91). He served as running backs coach, quarterbacks coach and offensive coordinator for one season before leaving to become the head coach at Northwestern.

POSTSEASON SUCCESS

CU defeated Oregon in the Aloha Bowl to extend its postseason winning streak to five games, which has only been accomplished 13 times in college football history.

THE REAL THING

The 1998 season was the last for artificial turf at Folsom Field. "SportGrass" was selected to replace the third version of the fake stuff first installed in 1971.

2nd
NORTH
DIVISION

1998 RECORD: 8-4 CONFERENCE FINISH: 4-4

S 5	Colorado St.	W, 42-14
S 12	Fresno St.	W, 29-21
S 19	Utah St.	W, 25-6
S 26	Baylor	W, 18-16
O 3	@ Oklahoma	W, 27-25
O 10	Kansas St.	L, 16-9
O 17	Texas Tech	W, 19-17
O 24	@ Kansas	L, 33-17
N 7	@ Missouri	L, 38-14
N 14	Iowa St.	W, 37-8
N 27	@ Nebraska	L, 16-14
D 25	vs. Oregon	W, 51-43

@ Aloha Bowl, Honolulu, Hawaii

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	John Minardi	6-2 185 So.	OLB	Fred Jones	6-3 244 Sr.
	Robert Toler	6-0 200 Sr.		James Weingardt	6-1 225 Fr.
WR	Marcus Stiggers	5-7 180 Sr.	NT	Justin Bannan	6-3 300 So.
	Javon Green	6-2 195 Jr.		Joel Harris	6-3 275 Fr.
WT	Victor Rogers	6-7 315 So.	DT	Sean Jarne	6-6 290 Jr.
	Kane Cullum	6-5 315 Sr.		Jesse Warren	6-4 275 Sr.
WG	R. Johanningmeier	6-7 310 Sr.	DE	Brady McDonnell	6-4 265 Jr.
	Chris Morgan	6-3 305 Sr.		Tyler Brayton	6-6 260 Fr.
C	Andre Gurode	6-4 310 So.	ILB	David Andrews	6-3 240 So.
	Martin Simmons	6-3 310 Sr.		Adam Schoenbaum	6-3 240 Fr.
SG	Brad Bedell	6-5 310 Sr.	ILB	Jashon Sykes	6-3 225 So.
	Justin Bates	6-4 290 Fr.		Scott Nemeth	6-2 225 So.
ST	Shane Cook	6-7 310 Sr.	OLB	Robert Haas	6-5 245 So.
	Kane Cullum	6-5 315 Sr.		Drew Whitroos	6-3 225 Fr.
TE	Daniel Graham	6-3 235 So.	LC	Damen Wheeler	5-10 175 Sr.
	Miles Koon	6-5 265 So.		Donald Strickland	5-10 175 Fr.
QB	Mike Moschetti	6-0 195 Sr.	SS	Michael Lewis	6-2 200 So.
	Taylor Barton	6-3 205 Fr.		Ryan Chiaverini	6-0 195 Sr.
TB	D. Cherrington	5-10 195 Sr.	FS	Rashidi Barnes	6-0 190 Sr.
	Cortlen Johnson	5-9 190 So.		Terrence Wood	5-10 175 So.
FB	Brandon Drumm	6-2 220 Fr.	RC	Ben Kelly	5-10 185 Jr.
	Beau Williams	6-3 225 Fr.		Nate Wright	6-0 180 So.
PK	Jeremy Aldrich	5-11 170 Sr.	P	Nick Pietsch	6-0 195 Sr.

Players with starting experience in bold

KANSAS STATE WILDCATS

Any discussion of Kansas State football inevitably includes Nebraska.

Perhaps it's the geographical proximity, a neighbor thing. Kansas State is, after all, the closest Big 12 school to Nebraska. Or perhaps it's because Nebraska was the last school in the former Big Eight that the Wildcats defeated in their dramatic rise to national prominence under Coach Bill Snyder.

Prior to last season's game, which Kansas State won 40-30 to end a 29-game losing streak to Nebraska, Cornhusker Coach Frank Solich was asked if the Wildcats had replaced Oklahoma as Nebraska's primary rival. "I'll tell you, it appears to me that we've got a lot of rivals," he said, eliciting laughter.

"I mean that seriously, because every time we step on the field . . . this program has won so much, and within the last four to five years won more than anybody, that we get everybody's best shot.

"If everybody's not trying to build their program around beating us, they feel their program's there and they want to prove a point. You're always going to get someone's best shot when you're us."

That might be true. But hasn't Kansas State patterned its program after Nebraska's?

"I guess I'm not sure who they may have modeled themselves after," said Solich. "They do run the football, and yet they'll kill you with the pass. As you look at it, I think there's been a little bit of an evolution around the country to try to run the ball a little bit more, period.

"It's been that way in our conference. How many have patterned themselves after us, I don't know. We see a lot of plays we generally run being run by a lot of people. But there are no secrets. To say we were the first ever to come up with these plays, that's not true. Coaching is giving and taking."

Which brings us back to Kansas State, from which much has been taken since last season, including assistant coaches Mike Stoops, Brent Venables, Jon Fabris and Mark Mangino.

Losing one assistant coach, much less four at once, can significantly impact even the most established program, particularly when that program has suffered numerous, and more obvious, losses, such as most of its offensive unit

and talented quarterback Michael Bishop, in particular.

Certainly, one player can't do it by himself. But Bishop was a difference-maker, and Kansas State's offensive success the last two seasons was due in large measure to him.

The Wildcats ranked first in the nation in scoring offense and ninth in total offense in 1998, averaging 48 points and 475.5 yards per game. Bishop accounted for 299 of the yards himself.

He was Kansas State's second-leading rusher, behind

Eric Hickson (who's also gone), as the Wildcats, once entirely air-bound, ranked third in the Big 12 and 12th nationally in rushing offense.

The running game to which Solich alluded was an integral part of Kansas State's success.

With Bishop, Hickson, wide receiver Darnell McDonald, and three interior line starters among those who have departed, there's almost certain to be a dramatic dropoff offensively.

But that doesn't mean the Wildcats should be ignored. Eight Alamo Bowl defensive starters, including five who were first- or second-team All-Big 12 selections, return. And though it might have been overlooked, defense has played an important role in the success.

The secondary, in particular, is solid, with starters returning at every position.

Junior strong safety Jarrod Cooper and senior

free safety Lamar Chapman were both first-team all-conference selections. Cooper, a consensus pick, was third on the team in tackles with 86. Chapman is being promoted by Kansas State as a candidate for the Jim Thorpe Award.

Senior Mark Simoneau, a two-time, Associated Press, first-team all-conference selection, is on the preseason watch list for the Butkus Award as the nation's top collegiate linebacker. In the past two seasons, he has been involved in 198 tackles. Obviously, he's a defensive leader.

Senior Travis Litton and sophomore Ben Leber, a Parade Magazine high school All-American from Vermillion, S.D.,

Kansas State Sports Information



Aaron Lockett caught 44 passes for a freshman record of 928 yards and six touchdowns.

move up to the other linebacker positions, vacated by Travis Ochs and Jeff Kelly, a consensus all-conference selection. Both Litton and Leber have starting experience.

Seniors Darren Howard and Damion McIntosh anchor the defensive line, which includes junior Monty Beisel and sophomore DeVane Robinson, both of whom were in the regular rotation last season.

Kansas State's offense never really faltered last season. But as noted earlier, that offensive unit has been dismantled and must be rebuilt, presumably around junior quarterback Jonathan Beasley.

Snyder took an admitted chance last season redshirting Beasley, who saw limited action as a true freshman and sophomore. He came off the bench in the Nebraska game in 1996 and carried five times for 40 yards. He has good size and arguably the strongest arm among the Wildcats.

Passing game coordinator and receivers coach Greg Peterson has his work cut out for him. Sophomore Aaron Lockett is outstanding. But after him, there are no experienced wide receivers.

Lockett caught 44 passes for a Kansas State freshman-record 928 yards and six touchdowns. He had 100 or more receiving yards in three consecutive games, including the Nebraska victory.

Although Hickson will be missed, junior David Allen, one of the nation's most dangerous kick returners, and senior Frank Murphy will provide big-play potential at tailback.

Allen rushed for 83 yards and a touchdown on 13 carries in the Alamo Bowl. He needs two touchdowns and 561 yards on punt returns to tie NCAA career records.

Two-time all-conference linebacker Mark Simoneau has been involved in 198 tackles the last two seasons.

Murphy, whose controversial arrival from junior college was well-publicized, is an explosive runner. He has a 42-inch vertical jump and is credited with 4.22 speed in the 40-yard dash.

The key to the running game will be a line rebuilt around juniors Randall Cummins and Milford Stephenson and sophomore Thomas Barnett. Cummins started every game at center a year ago, while Stephenson and Barnett divided the starting assignment at right tackle.

Finally, place-kicker Martin Gramatica and punter James Garcia must be replaced. Junior Jamie Rheem, who was redshirted last season, became the regular kicker in 1996 when Gramatica was sidelined by injury prior to the season. Rheem kicked a 51-yard field goal against Nebraska.

Prior to last season's victory against the Cornhuskers in Manhattan, Snyder, in typical fashion, was evasive in his answer to a question about the importance of the game to his program.

"I couldn't underplay the significance of this ballgame," he said. "But every ballgame we have played has probably been the biggest one that we've played at Kansas State."

Maybe so. But no Kansas State victory has received more attention. ■



Kansas State Sports Information



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 1999 FINISH:

3rd

NORTH DIVISION

STRENGTHS

Eight Alamo Bowl defensive starters return, including first-team All-Big 12 selections **Mark Simoneau** (linebacker), **Darren Howard** (end), **Jarrod Cooper** (cornerback) and **Lamar Chapman** (safety).

WEAKNESSES

With the departure of **Michael Bishop**, the Wildcats will be inexperienced at quarterback, and overall depth is a problem. The coaching staff had to be overhauled after the loss of defensive coordinator **Mike Stoops**, linebackers coach **Brent Venables**, defensive ends coach **Jon Fabris** and interior offensive line coach **Mike Mangino**.

CHASING JOHNNY

David Allen enters his junior season with five touchdowns on punt returns for a Kansas State and Big 12 record. He needs two touchdowns on returns to catch Nebraska's **Johnny Rodgers** and Oklahoma's **Jack Mitchell** for the former Big Eight and NCAA record of seven touchdowns.

CONSISTENT WINNER

Kansas State is one of just six schools to win at least nine games in each of the last six seasons. The others are Nebraska, Penn State, Ohio State, Florida and Florida State.

STILL GROWING

A stadium expansion project at KSU Stadium will add 8,000 permanent seats to the structure. Capacity for the stadium will increase to 50,000. A record 36,000 season tickets were sold for the 1998 season, compared to 9,336 in 1989, **Bill Snyder's** first year at the school.

1998 RECORD: 11-2 CONFERENCE FINISH: 8-0

S 5	Indiana St.	W, 66-0
S 12	Northern Illinois	W, 73-7
S 19	Texas	W, 48-7
S 26	NE Louisiana	W, 62-7
O 10	@ Colorado	W, 16-9
O 17	Oklahoma St.	W, 52-20
O 24	Iowa St.	W, 52-7
Oct 31	@ Kansas	W, 54-6
N 7	@ Baylor	W, 49-6
N 14	Nebraska	W, 40-30
N 21	@ Missouri	W, 31-25
Dec 5	Texas A&M	L, 36-33 (2ot)
D 29	vs. Purdue	L, 37-34

@Big 12 Championship, St. Louis, Mo.
@Alamo Bowl, San Antonio, Texas

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	Aaron Lockett	5-7 155 So.	DE	Monty Beisel	6-3 255 Jr.
	Quincy Morgan	6-2 205 Jr.		Chris Johnson	6-1 265 Jr.
LT	Milf. Stephenson	6-4 290 Jr.	DT	DeVane Robinson	6-1 270 Fr.
	Ryan Cummings	6-2 275 Jr.		Eric Everley	6-8 315 So.
LG	Ian Moses	6-4 285 Sr.	DT	Damion McIntosh	6-4 290 Jr.
	Ryan Cummings	6-4 280 Jr.		Nijjah McCoy	6-3 290 Sr.
C	Randall Cummins	6-3 285 Jr.	DE	Darren Howard	6-4 270 Jr.
	Dan Divilbiss	6-1 270 So.		Melvin Williams	6-4 255 Fr.
RG	Andy Eby	6-3 280 So.	LB	Travis Litton	6-2 240 Jr.
	Steve Washington	6-4 320 Fr.		Da'Von Brame	6-2 220 Jr.
RT	John Robertson	6-4 280 So.	LB	Ben Leber	6-3 250 So.
	Dennis Jones	6-7 310 So.		Turelle Williams	6-0 230 Jr.
TE	Shad Meier	6-5 245 Jr.	LB	Mark Simoneau	6-0 240 Sr.
	Nick Warren	6-7 255 So.		Jason Kazar	6-0 225 Jr.
QB	Jonathan Beasley	6-1 220 Jr.	CB	Jerametrius Butler	5-10 175 Fr.
	Adam Helm	6-3 220 Sr.		Adrian Beard	5-8 175 Fr.
RB	David Allen	5-9 195 Jr.	FS	Lamar Chapman	6-0 180 Sr.
	Frank Murphy	6-1 205 Sr.		Jon McGraw	6-3 200 So.
FB	Johnno Lazetich	6-1 245 Jr.	SS	Jarrod Cooper	6-1 205 Jr.
	Ryan Payne	6-0 235 Sr.		Milton Proctor	6-0 200 So.
WR	Brandon Clark	6-3 220 So.	CB	Dyshod Carter	5-10 185 Jr.
	Martez Wesley	5-11 175 Jr.		Terence Newman	5-11 170 Fr.
PK	Jamie Rheem	6-1 190 Jr.	P	Travis Brown	6-5 230 Fr.

Players with starting experience in bold

MISSOURI TIGERS

First, a little personal history...

Larry Smith's first coaching job at the collegiate level was as an assistant to Bo Schembechler at Miami (Ohio) University. He followed Schembechler to Michigan in 1969.

Smith joined Jim Young's staff at Arizona in 1973 as linebackers coach and defensive coordinator until becoming the head coach at Tulane in 1976. During those years, he developed an old-school coaching philosophy that has served him well, and helped revitalize Missouri's once-proud program.

"I was born and raised on single-wing football," Smith has said. "That is not fancy stuff. You just line up and knock the tar out of the guy over you. I expect to have a football team that will be physical. We're going into every game to do one thing first, and that's to out-hit the other guy."

This should be Smith's kind of team, particularly on defense, where the Tigers have made dramatic improvement in the last two years. If they can put together an offense in the post-Corby Jones era, they could be serious contenders for a spot in the Big 12 play-off at San Antonio on Dec. 4.

That's a big if, of course, because tailback Devin West also is gone. West ranked third in the conference and fifth nationally in rushing, with 1,578 yards and 17 touchdowns.

Jones scored Missouri's other 11 rushing touchdowns and combined with West for 3,395 yards rushing and passing. That was 88.2 percent of the total offense. They will be missed.

The Tigers might not need too much offense to support a defense built around the big-play ability of sophomore end Justin Smith and junior linebacker Jamonte Robinson.

Smith, Missouri's first true freshman to start every game since cornerback Adrian Jones in 1986 and the conference "Defensive Freshman of the Year," has been compared to former Nebraska All-American and Lombardi Award winner Grant Wistrom, and not just because they're both from Missouri. Smith is from Jefferson City. (Wistrom was from

Webb City.)

The 6-foot-5, 267-pound Smith is "so strong that he doesn't even realize what all he can do yet," defensive coordinator Moe Ankney has said. "He can run, too."

Smith holds the team record in the power clean (450 pounds) and runs the 40 in 4.6 seconds, skills that contributed to his making 86 tackles, including a team-high 13 for losses and 3.5 sacks.

In addition to Smith, the other returning starters on defense are nosetackle Jeff Marriott, tackle Steve Erickson, strongside linebacker Barry Odom and cornerback Carlos Posey.

Erickson is a junior. The others are seniors.

Senior guard Pat Mingucci also has starting experience, giving the Tigers a veteran front.

They have considerably more depth than they've had in recent seasons up-front, which will take some pressure off a talented but young and, for the most part, inexperienced secondary.

Posey, the forgotten member of an otherwise senior secondary last season, has 4.33 speed in the 40, making him the fastest on the team.

Junior free safety Julian Jones is among the team's best athletes, with 4.5 speed in the 40 and a 37.5-inch vertical jump. During winter conditioning, he high jumped 6-10, diving head first over the



Linebacker Barry Odom has started every game the last two seasons. He had 74 tackles as a junior.

bar.

Such athletes have been a significant factor in Missouri's dramatic defensive improvement. They'll need to maintain that level to compensate for an inexperienced offense, which likely will resemble the one of two seasons ago when carries were divided among two or three backs.

Smith sought advice from other coaches, including Florida's Steve Spurrier and Arizona's Dick Tomey, about the problems associated with alternating quarterbacks because the competition between Jim Dougherty and Kirk Farmer in spring practice was too close to call.

The 6-5, 200-pound Farmer is an outstanding athlete and

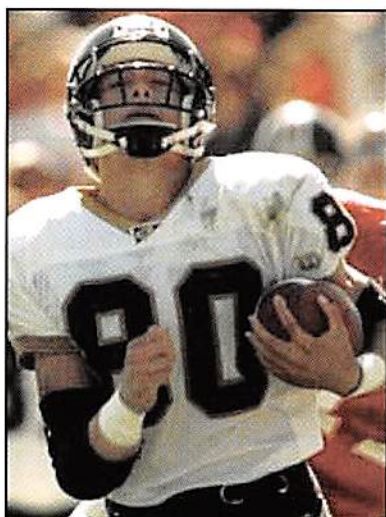
dazzled coaches with his play on the scout team as a red-shirt freshman, but doing it in games is a much different matter.

Someone will have to get the ball to a group of talented receivers, among them junior John Dausman and seniors Kareem Wise and Kent Layman, all of whom have starting experience.

Dausman, a walkon who has 4.3 speed in the 40, came on strong last season, catching 18 passes for 364 yards and three touchdowns.

Senior Rob West is a returning starter and the best ball carrier among the fullbacks. But the bulk of the ball carrying will be handled by some combination of senior DeVaughn Black, sophomore Zain Gilmore and diminutive junior Ricardo Rhodes.

The offensive line is being rebuilt around 6-3, 285-pound senior center Rob Riti, a first-team all-conference selection.



Junior wide receiver John Dausman has come on strong. He averaged 20.2 yards per reception.

Missouri Sports Information

Riti is the only returning starter — he has 33 consecutive starts. But sophomore Jeff Hellerstedt did start five games at left guard in his first season, and the Tigers aren't devoid of offensive linemen with potential. The problem is, most of them are sophomores or red-shirted freshmen.

The same situation exists at tight end, where the top three are sophomores.

Senior Vince Sebo returns. He averaged 41.5 yards per punt last season but needs to be more consistent, as does the place-kicker — whoever he might be.

Erratic kicking cost the Tigers as many as three games last season, according to Smith. Had they won at least two of those three games — depending on the two — they could have represented the north division in the Big 12 championship game. They were that close to competing for the conference title.

Smith has done a good job of getting Missouri back on track. Enthusiasm in Columbia is high. Attendance at Faurt Field, to which Nebraska must return for the first time since Matt Davison's miracle catch in the 1997 national championship season, was the highest since 1981.

Average home attendance was 57,335, compared to 39,171 just two seasons ago.

Missouri Athletic Director Michael Alden showed his appreciation for what Smith has accomplished as head coach of the Tigers last December, when he rewarded Smith with a new five-year contract, with an annual base salary reported to be \$180,000 — which puts him in the upper half of the Big 12.

"I am very pleased that the university chose to extend my contract," said the 59-year-old Smith, whose previous contract would have expired after the 2001 season. "I'm looking forward to continuing to build our program in the next five years. We have made some tremendous strides in all areas..."

Among those areas is winning, which his teams have done the old-fashioned way. ■



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 1999 FINISH:

4th
**NORTH
DIVISION**

STRENGTHS

The Tigers have made dramatic improvements on defense, going from 76th nationally in total defense to 21st last season. They also allowed nearly 12 fewer points per game in 1998 and were opportunistic as well, getting 25 turnovers that translated into 108 points.

WEAKNESSES

The Tigers lost 88.2 percent of their total offense in quarterback **Corby Jones** and tailback **Devin West**. West rushed for 1,578 yards and 17 touchdowns. Jones scored the other 11 rushing touchdowns and combined with West for 3,395 yards rushing and passing.

ON HIS WAY

Sophomore end **Justin Smith**, was named the Big 12 "Defensive Freshman of the Year." He was credited with 58 tackles in the final six games, prompting defensive coordinator **Moe Ankney** to remark late last season: "He's not a star yet, but he's one in the making."

KICKING WOES

Missouri made just four field goals last season. Erratic kicking cost the Tigers as many as three games, according to Coach **Larry Smith**. Had they won at least two of those three games -- depending on the two -- they could have represented the north division in the Big 12 championship game. They were that close to competing for the conference title.

NEARING RECORD

Senior wide receiver **Kent Layman** has caught a pass in 23 consecutive games, two short of the school record. He had 26 catches for 495 yards and two touchdowns last season.

1998 RECORD: 8-4 CONFERENCE FINISH: 5-3

S 5	Bowling Green	W, 37-0
S 12	@ Kansas	W, 41-23
S 19	@ Ohio St.	L, 35-14
O 3	Northwestern St.	W, 35-14
O 10	@ Iowa St.	W, 35-19
O 17	Oklahoma	W, 20-6
O 24	@ Nebraska	L, 20-13
O 31	@ Texas Tech	W, 28-26
N 7	Colorado	W, 38-14
N 14	@ Texas A&M	L, 17-14
N 21	Kansas St.	L, 31-25
D 26	vs. West Virginia	W, 34-31

& Insight.com Bowl, San Diego, Calif.

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	John Dausman	6-1 182 Jr.	OLB	Pat Duffy	6-1 223 So.
	Kareem Wise	6-3 218 Sr.		Danny McCamy	6-3 264 Jr.
LT	Adam Crittendon	6-5 315 So.	G	Pat Mingucci	6-2 271 Sr.
	Joe Glauber	6-3 282 So.		Cedric Harden	6-3 283 Fr.
LG	Jeff Hellerstedt	6-4 280 So.	N	Jeff Marriott	6-5 300 Sr.
	Wes Wilson	6-4 295 Fr.		Chris Ryan	6-3 284 So.
C	Rob Riti	6-3 289 Sr.	T	Steve Erickson	6-4 280 Jr.
	David Webber	6-2 310 Sr.		Terrell Jurineack	6-4 275 Sr.
RG	Mike Hayes	6-3 296 So.	E	Justin Smith	6-5 256 So.
	Adrian Cole	6-4 310 So.		Daryl Whittington	6-6 240 Jr.
RT	Justin Bland	6-6 321 So.	SAM	Barry Odom	6-0 229 Sr.
	Brad Smith	6-6 294 Sr.		Duke Revard	6-3 235 So.
TE	Dwayne Blakley	6-4 268 So.	WILL	Jamonte Robinson	6-2 202 So.
	Brandon Ford	6-3 245 So.		Josh O'Neal	6-1 228 Fr.
QB	Jim Dougherty	6-4 190 So.	SS	Clarence Jones	6-1 199 So.
	Kirk Farmer	6-5 216 Fr.		Harold Hendricks	6-3 215 Jr.
TB	DeVaughn Black	5-11 213 Sr.	HB	Carlos Possey	6-0 197 Sr.
	Zain Gilmore	6-1 220 So.		Andre Roberson	5-10 164 Jr.
FB	Rob West	6-0 231 Sr.	FS	Julian Jones	5-11 188 Jr.
	T.J. Leon	6-0 215 Fr.		Julian Jones	5-11 189 So.
WR	Kent Layman	5-11 185 Sr.	CB	Antoine Duncan	5-10 181 Fr.
	Eric Spencer	6-1 170 So.		John McPherson	5-11 178 Fr.
PK	Brian Long	5-11 205 So.	P	Vince Sebo	6-1 217 Sr.

Players with starting experience in bold

IOWA STATE CYCLONES

The Ames Tribune published a special section. Students pulled down the goal posts at Iowa State's practice field and dumped them in a lake on campus. And Coach Dan McCarney dyed his hair gold following the Cyclones' 27-9 upset of archrival Iowa at Iowa City last season.

McCarney had promised his players he would dye his hair if they won.

"These type of watershed wins build credibility with your fans," he said.

The victory, in which Iowa State dominated both offensively and defensively, snapped a 15-game losing streak against the Hawkeyes, and ended a 31-game winless streak on the road.

It also gave Iowa State an in-state recruiting boost. McCarney put together what was regarded as the program's best recruiting class in recent years. Among those he signed was Casey Shelton, a 6-foot-8, 245-pound defensive end who was aggressively recruited by Nebraska as well as by Iowa.

The Cyclones followed the Iowa victory by defeating Ball State 38-0 for a 2-1 start. But then Big 12 play began, and they lost seven straight before finishing with a victory against Kansas.

The three wins last season equaled the most during his four-year tenure as head coach. The Cyclones also won three his first season. They won only three combined in the second and third seasons, however. "Is that the most important thing for a college football coach? Yes," McCarney said.

But, he said, Athletic Director Gene Smith had required no minimum number of victories for his continued employment, a fact underscored by his being given a contract extension through the 2001 season in early November, in the midst of the seven-game losing streak.

Iowa State hasn't had a winning season since 1989, when Coach Jim Walden's third Cyclone team was 6-5, and the program hasn't been a consistent winner since the mid-1970s. Such frustration feeds on itself. "When you haven't won, your confidence level is so fragile," said McCarney.

Winning and good times don't appear to be in the Cyclones' immediate future, even though they do have 17

starters returning, among them senior tailback Darren Davis, who has rushed for more than 1,000 yards in back-to-back seasons, something only five other Iowa State players have done.

Barring injury, Davis should move to second on the Cyclones' career-rushing list by season's end. His brother Troy, who rushed for more than 2,000 yards in back-to-back seasons, is first.

Darren Davis is not the only one with ability at Iowa State, McCarney said.

"We feel like we are as well-stocked as anyone nationally at tailback."

In addition to sophomore Ennis Heyword, who rushed for a spring game-high 149 yards, and redshirted freshman Atif Austin, four scholarship-recruit running backs will arrive in the fall, including another Davis brother — Jason. Depth is such that junior J.J. Moses was moved to flanker in the spring.

A key to an improved running attack, however, rests with the quarterback. "We want to seek a balance of running and throwing the football," McCarney said. "Our ability to run the football with production from the quarterback position will play a major part in our efforts to accomplish that goal."

The Cyclones ranked third in the conference in passing offense a year ago, on the strong right

arm of Todd Bandhauer, who threw for more than 2,000 yards in back-to-back seasons.

He'll be succeeded by either junior Sage Rosenfels or Derrick Walker, a transfer from Blinn, Texas, Junior College who enrolled for second semester and went through spring practice.

The 6-2, 228-pound Walker, who has been timed in the 40-yard dash in 4.5 seconds, comes from the same program that produced former Kansas State quarterback and 1998 Heisman Trophy runner-up Michael Bishop, while Rosenfels played sparingly as Bandhauer's backup.

Whether Iowa State is able to run the ball better than it

Cyclone Illustrated



Senior linebacker Jesse Beckom was named the Big 12 "Defensive Newcomer of the Year."

did last season, when it ranked 10th in the conference and 81st in the nation in rushing, depends, of course, on the offensive line.

The Cyclones will be able to put five players with starting experience on the field: seniors Bill Marsau and Ryan Gerke, juniors Ben Beaudet and Ben Bruns and sophomore Marcel Howard.

Beaudet, who has been moved to center after playing tackle last season and guard the season before, and Howard, who is 6-5 and 302 pounds, were held out of spring practice as a precaution after suffering concussions last season. Marsau is being counted on for leadership in the line.

Senior Damien Groce, a first-team all-conference selection, and junior split end Chris Anthony combined to catch 89 passes for 1,130 yards and nine touchdowns last season, and junior tight end Andy Stensrud is a receiving threat, as well as an imposing presence at 6-7, 227 pounds.

Groce's best game was against Texas Tech, 10 receptions for 166 yards and three touchdowns. An Iowa State player had not caught three touchdown passes in a game since 1950.

Defensively, the Cyclones still have a long way to go to be competitive.

Statistically, Iowa State's most significant improvement came in scoring defense. The Cyclones allowed an average of 29.8 points per game last season, 15 fewer than in 1997.

Darren Davis rushed for 1,166 yards and seven touchdowns. He also caught 29 passes for 242 yards and two scores.

McCarney has tried to recruit strength up-front and speed across the board to rectify the glaring defensive deficiencies. "We should be much more physical this season," he said.

Senior tackle James Reed and junior end Reggie Hayward are proven players. Seniors Jesse Beckom and Dave Brcka are solid at linebacker. And senior free safety Jeff Waters is the leader of an experienced secondary, coached by former Cornhusker quarterback Mike Grant.

Reed was a third-team all-conference selection, while Hayward received honorable mention. Beckom was the Big 12 "Defensive Newcomer of the Year," after transferring from tiny Trinity College in Deerfield, Ill. And Brcka has been a starter since his freshman season.

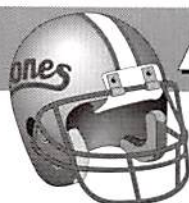
The Cyclones have an experienced punter in junior Carl Gomez, a two-year starter who averaged 40.0 yards per punt on 59 punts last season, but an inexperienced place-kicker.

McCarney is optimistic about the immediate future. "We have established credibility in the Iowa State University community," he said. "You need stability on your coaching staff, and we have that as well, which demonstrates that people believe in your program and are vested in its success."

Success means more than upsetting Iowa once every 16 seasons, however. ■



Cyclone Illustrated



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 1999 FINISH:

5th
**NORTH
DIVISION**

STRENGTHS

Tailback **Darren Davis** has rushed for more than 1,000 yards in each of the last two seasons.

WEAKNESSES

The Cyclones ranked 85th nationally in scoring defense, 86th in total defense, 95th in passing defense and 103rd in rushing defense last season. And those rankings all represented improvement from the previous season.

ATHLETIC ENOUGH

At 6-foot-4 and 218 pounds, **Sage Rosenfels** has the look of a dropback passer. But he's athletic enough to run some options and operate from a spread formation in **Dan McCarney's** restructured offense. Rosenfels and junior college transfer **Derrick Walker** emerged from the spring in a virtual tie atop the depth chart.

ROOM TO RUN

Iowa State allowed 221.0 yards rushing per game, giving up more than 200 yards to Ricky Williams of Texas, Devin West of Missouri and Marlon Barnes of Colorado.

A WORK IN PROGRESS

Progress remains painfully slow in Ames. McCarney's words at the Big 12 media preview last August are as appropriate now as they were then. "I think people appreciate the way we've tried to build this and not take any shortcuts," he said in Dallas. "We've tried to do this with class and dignity. Now, would we all like to have more wins? We'd love to have more."

1998 RECORD: 3-8 CONFERENCE FINISH: 1-7

S 5	TCU	L, 31-21
S 12	@ Iowa	W, 27-9
S 19	Ball St.	W, 38-0
S 26	Texas Tech	L, 31-24
O 3	@ Texas	L, 54-33
O 10	Missouri	L, 35-19
O 24	@ Kansas St.	L, 52-7
O 31	@ Oklahoma	L, 17-14
N 7	Nebraska	L, 42-7
N 14	@ Colorado	L, 37-8
N 21	Kansas	W, 23-20

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

SE	Chris Anthony	6-3 198 Jr.	RE	Reggie Hayward	6-5 241 Jr.
	Michael Brantley	6-0 190 Sr.		James Elmore	6-2 246 Sr.
LT	Bill Marsau	6-5 294 Sr.	DT	James Reed	6-0 277 Jr.
	Jared Bucks	6-3 271 So.		Nigel Tharpe	6-4 289 Jr.
LG	Ben Bruns	6-3 300 Jr.	NG	Ryan Harklau	6-3 271 Jr.
	Adam Sansale	6-3 300 So.		Nigel Tharpe	6-4 289 Jr.
C	Ben Beaudet	6-4 291 Jr.	END	Kevin DeRonde	6-5 255 So.
	Josh Rank	6-4 280 Jr.		Robert Bannon	6-3 293 Sr.
RG	Ryan Gerke	6-4 300 Sr.	OLB	Jim Morse	6-1 224 Jr.
	Brian Donahue	6-4 271 So.		Curt Schroeder	6-0 200 So.
RT	Marcel Howard	6-5 302 So.	MLB	Dave Brcka	6-2 243 Sr.
	Cory Hannen	6-4 300 So.		Eric Weiford	6-0 204 Jr.
FL	Damien Groce	5-10 182 Sr.	OLB	Jesse Beckom	6-0 209 Sr.
	J.J. Moses	5-6 173 Jr.		Andrew Moser	5-10 228 So.
QB	Sage Rosenfels	6-4 218 Jr.	FS	Jeff Waters	6-2 184 Sr.
	Derrick Walker	6-2 228 Jr.		Jason Parrott	6-0 194 Sr.
TB	Darren Davis	5-8 190 Sr.	CB	Jamarcus Powers	5-9 175 Jr.
	Ennis Haywood	5-10 209 So.		Ryan Sloth	5-8 182 Jr.
FB	Hez Jackson	6-0 236 Sr.	SS	Dustin Avey	6-3 210 Jr.
	Jerome Heavens	5-9 230 Jr.		Doug Densmore	5-10 200 Jr.
TE	Andy Stensrud	6-7 277 Jr.	CB	Breon Ansley	5-6 172 Jr.
	Mike Banks	6-4 249 So.		Jayon Daniels	6-0 170 Sr.
PK	Mike McKnight	6-3 207 So.	P	Carl Gomez	6-2 201 Jr.

Players with starting experience in bold

KANSAS JAYHAWKS

Terry Allen might have left Kansas after only two seasons, if he had been so inclined. Iowa was looking for a successor to Hayden Fry, and Allen met with the search committee.

That he would look into the job was understandable. For one thing, Allen and Iowa Athletic Director Bob Bowlsby are close friends. For another, Allen was born and raised in Iowa City.

More importantly, however, his mom was about to go through heart bypass surgery there. So his interest in the Hawkeyes' coaching vacancy was based on "a family situation and a personal situation," he said at a news conference to announce he was withdrawing from consideration.

"It was not like a situation in the past where I was searching for a new job. I am not a job searcher. We have a lot of work to get done here, and I am committed to doing that. And I am extremely excited about that. I feel like I have the weight of the world lifted off my shoulders."

That was in early December. Now, Allen is preparing to shoulder the considerable burden of turning around a program that has struggled during his first two seasons.

The Jayhawks were 5-6 in 1997, then dropped to 4-7 last season. Even though the numbers indicate a slight decline, Kansas improved in 1998, according to Allen. "I truly feel this way," he said. "I think the sophomore season is often times one of the most difficult (for a coach)."

The program will be better for the experience, however. "I'll be a better head coach," said Allen. "I think our assistant coaches will do a better job of coaching the situations. I think our players will be better prepared both physically and mentally to win the fourth-quarter battles."

The Jayhawks had problems winning fourth-quarter battles last season. They led or were tied in the fourth quarter of four of their seven losses, to Baylor, Texas A&M, Oklahoma State and Iowa State. "You can't help but look

back and get into the old 'what-if' mentality," Allen said.

Kansas is likely to have depth problems again this season at some positions, despite the return of 16 starters. The health of senior quarterback Zac Wegner is a concern. The offensive line must be rebuilt around two returning starters. And the linebackers are new and inexperienced.

The Jayhawks have the most depth at running back and wide receiver, their strongest positions.

The tailback tandem of junior David Winbush and senior Mitch Bowles is top-notch, though undersized. Winbush is 5-foot-7 and 180 pounds. Bowles is 5-8 and 185 pounds.

Winbush, who has only 5.8 percent body fat and 4.59 speed in the 40-yard dash, rushed for 974 yards and nine touchdowns on 209 carries to rank sixth in the conference last season. With two seasons remaining, he needs 451 yards to move into the school's top 10 career rushers.

Bowles, whose 4.56 speed in the 40 also serves him well as a kick returner, rushed for 438 yards and four touchdowns and caught 10 passes for 223 yards and one touchdown.

Junior Moran Norris, a converted tight end, is a returning starter at fullback.

The Jayhawks have an abundance of experienced wide receivers, led by sophomores Harrison

Hill and Byron Gasaway, junior Termaine Fulton and senior Michael Chandler.

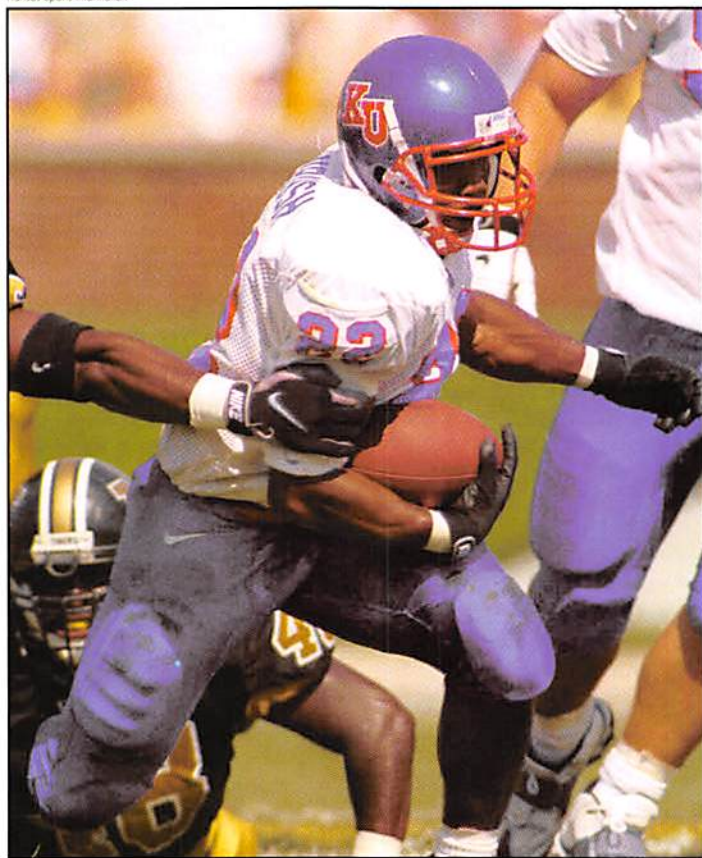
And junior Jason Gulley started the final seven games at tight end a year ago.

Fulton was the most explosive of the group, catching 25 passes for 503 yards and three touchdowns. Hill caught 28 passes for 391 yards and two touchdowns. Chandler caught 21 passes for 236 yards and one touchdown. And Gasaway caught 12 passes for 148 yards and two touchdowns.

In addition, redshirted freshmen Anton Paige played well in spring practice and will join the mix.

The responsibility for getting the ball to the receivers

Kansas Sports Information



Tailback David Winbush rushed for 974 yards and nine touchdowns as a sophomore.

will fall to either Wegner or junior Dylon Smith, a heralded transfer from Santa Monica, Calif., Community College.

Wegner, who completed 91-of-186 passes (48.9 percent) for 1,367 yards and seven touchdowns with six interceptions, suffered concussions in consecutive games and was forced to miss the final two games last season. He also was limited in the spring, creating further uncertainty.

Smith might well end up as the starter anyway if he's as good as expected. He passed for 2,890 yards and 25 touchdowns last season, in an offensive system similar to Allen's.

The Jayhawks ranked ninth in the conference in total offense. Regardless of the quarterback, they must develop a line to protect him if they are to be more productive.

Seniors Chris Enneking, the center, and Dameon Hunt, a guard, are the returning starters. Hunt has 27 consecutive starts, in fact. Sophomore tackle Bob Smith was a part-time starter.

Kansas ranked last in the Big 12 in rushing defense and scoring defense last season, allowing averages of 235.6 rushing yards (107th nationally) and 31 points per game.

Allen expressed concerns about the defensive line early, and those concerns remain, even though all of the starters, seniors Dion Johnson, Dion Rayford and John Williams, return.

The linebackers must all be replaced, with juniors Dariss Lomax, Tim Bowers and Chaz Murphy and sophomore Andrew LeClair among the top candidates. Lomax returns after sitting out last season for academic reasons. Murphy is a transfer from

Garden City, Kan., Community College.

The secondary is slightly more experienced with the return of seniors Chad Coellner and Muhammad Abdul-Rahim and sophomore Andrew Davison, who have 17 starts between them.

Coellner, the free safety, is among the most athletic on the team. He was credited with 68 tackles last season. Abdul-Rahim, like Davison a cornerback, intercepted a team-high three passes.

Junior place-kicker Joe Garcia was successful on 12-of-17 field goals, including 4-of-7 from 40 to 49 yards. Sophomore punter Matt Tyler will be hard-pressed to retain his job with the arrival of transfer Joey Pelfanio, who averaged 42.3 yards per punt at Sacramento, Calif., Community College.

Kansas was tied going into the fourth quarter of the final game at Iowa State last season. If the Jayhawks could have found a way to win, they would have finished 5-6.

But the Jayhawks came up just short, as was often the case in Allen's second season. Nevertheless, he seems satisfied at Kansas. Returning from a personal visit to Iowa City after considering the Iowa job, "as we pulled back into Lawrence, I felt like I was at home again," he said.

"And that's really important to me." ■



Kansas Sports Information

Junior Termaine Fulton, who caught 25 passes for 503 yards, leads an experienced group of wide receivers.



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 1999 FINISH:

6th
NORTH DIVISION

STRENGTHS

The tailback tandem of junior **David Winbush** and senior **Mitch Bowles** is top-notch, and the Jayhawks have an abundance of experienced wide receivers.

WEAKNESSES

The offensive line must be rebuilt around two returning starters, and the linebackers are new and inexperienced. Kansas ranked last in the Big 12 in rushing defense and scoring defense.

ALMOST 1,000

Tailback David Winbush rushed for 98 yards in the final game against Iowa State and finished just 26 short of the 1,000-yard plateau. Coach **Terry Allen** said before that game, "we are not going to rush him 40 times just to try to get him over 1,000 yards."

FOURTH-QUARTER BLUES

The Jayhawks had problems winning fourth-quarter battles last season. They led or were tied in the fourth quarter of four of their seven losses. "You get those four games, 8-3, that's fantastic. You get half of those games and you're 6-5, and you really feel good about the direction of the program," Allen said. "Unfortunately, we didn't get any of them."

DEPTH PERCEPTION

Allen said lack of depth caught up with Kansas. "I think the most important thing is to realize that we knew going into the year that depth was a problem for us, and obviously that surfaced. Again, I'm not making excuses. But the reality of the situation catches up with you. I think the Big 12 really exposes your lack of depth, more so than the old Big Eight, if I can use that term."

1998 RECORD: 4-7 CONFERENCE FINISH: 1-7

S 5	Oklahoma St.	L, 38-28
S 12	@ Missouri	L, 41-23
S 19	Illinois St.	W, 63-21
S 26	@ UAB	W, 39-37 (4ot)
O 3	Texas A&M	L, 24-21
O 10	@ Baylor	L, 31-24
O 17	@ Nebraska	L, 42-0
O 24	Colorado	W, 33-17
O 31	Kansas St.	L, 54-6
N 7	North Texas	W, 23-14
N 21	@ Iowa St.	L, 23-20

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

SE	Harrison Hill	5-11 185 So.	LE	Dion Rayford	6-3 260 Sr.
	Eric Patterson	6-1 205 Jr.		Jeremy Hanak	6-6 250 Sr.
LT	Bob Smith	6-4 275 So.	NT	John Williams	6-2 300 Sr.
	Gabe Rosalis	8-5 275 Fr.		Nate Dwyer	6-3 300 So.
LG	Dameon Hunt	6-2 310 Sr.	RE	Dion Johnson	6-4 290 Sr.
	Chuck Jarvis	6-6 315 Jr.		Kareem Carter	6-6 270 Sr.
C	Chris Enneking	6-4 280 Sr.	OLB	Tim Bowers	6-0 220 Jr.
	Bob Schmidt	6-1 280 Jr.		Victor Bullock	6-2 250 Jr.
RG	Jason Stevenson	6-1 285 So.	ILB	Andrew LeClair	6-6 235 So.
	John Odonetto	6-5 285 Jr.		Scott Rogers	6-2 230 Jr.
RT	Justin Hartwig	6-4 290 So.	ILB	Dariss Lomax	6-2 230 Jr.
	Ben Coleman	6-4 300 So.		Marcus Rogers	6-1 235 So.
TE	Jason Gulley	6-3 255 Jr.	OLB	Algie Atkinson	6-5 220 So.
	Steve Kullberg	6-5 240 So.		Chaz Murphy	6-4 252 Jr.
QB	Zac Wegner	6-2 200 Sr.	LC	Quincy Roe	5-9 180 So.
	Jay Alexander	6-2 200 Jr.		Jahmal Wright	5-8 180 Sr.
FL	Termaine Fulton	5-10 188 Jr.	FS	Chad Coellner	6-0 200 Sr.
	Michael Chandler	5-11 195 Sr.		Bilal Cook	5-10 180 Jr.
HB	David Winbush	5-7 175 Jr.	SS	Greg Erb	6-0 185 Sr.
	Mitch Bowles	5-8 190 Sr.		Kareem High	5-10 200 Jr.
FB	Moran Norris	6-2 245 Jr.	RC	Andrew Davison	5-11 195 So.
	Tyrus Fontenot	5-8 230 Sr.		M. Abdul-Rahim	6-0 185 Sr.
PK	Joe Garcia	6-0 175 Jr.	P	Matt Tyler	6-3 215 So.

Players with starting experience in bold

TEXAS A&M AGGIES

At this time last year, many of Texas A&M's players already had Oct. 10 — the day Nebraska arrived in College Station — circled on their calendars. Sure, the Aggies would open with Florida State in the Kickoff Classic and would face four other opponents before the Cornhuskers came calling. But the focus of many team members and the focal game of the season was undeniably Nebraska.

Still stinging from the 54-15 loss to the Huskers in the 1997 Big 12 Championship Game, the Aggies desperately wanted to prove to the nation, themselves and the Huskers that they belonged on the same field as Nebraska.

Mission accomplished. A&M's 28-21 victory over then-No. 2 Nebraska propelled the Aggies to the 1998 Big 12 title in more ways than one. It was, of course, a huge victory in the standings. And the A&M players say it also gave them the big-game confidence they needed to upend then-No. 1 Kansas State in the league's title game.

Now, as they prepare for the start of the 1999 season, the battle-tested and veteran-laden Aggies (18 returning starters, including both kicking specialists) again have the Huskers on their minds. The A&M players have made it known that their goal for this season is to bring in the new millennium by playing for the national championship in the Sugar Bowl. But they also know that their road to New Orleans must first go through Lincoln.

"I'd be lying to you if I said I hadn't taken a peek at the schedule and mentally circled that Nebraska game (on Nov. 6)," said senior cornerback Sedrick Curry, whose fourth-quarter interception of a Bobby Newcombe pass sealed A&M's win last year. "We know it's going to be a war up there. We know they're going to be ready. And we know they are one of the big road blocks that stand between us and where we want to go this season."

"But hey, a game like that is what you play big-time col-

lege football for in the first place. They taught us a lesson about big-time football in 1997, and we proved that we had learned from it last year. Now, this year's game will give us another opportunity to prove if we have what it takes to take the next step."

The next step once seemed like an impossible leap for the Aggies, who entering last year had an 0-13 all-time record against opponents ranked higher than No. 4 in the national polls. But 1998 victories over Nebraska and Kansas

State went a long way toward removing the big-game black eye that haunted the Aggies for years.

Overall, A&M went 2-2 against opponents ranked in the Top 3, losing to No. 2 Florida State (23-14) in the Kickoff Classic and No. 3 Ohio State (24-14) in the Sugar Bowl. And since December of 1997, the Aggies have faced six Top 5 opponents and 10 bowl representatives.

A&M players say all those big-game experiences — and specifically, finally winning a few — provide the Aggies with the confidence to aim higher in 1999.

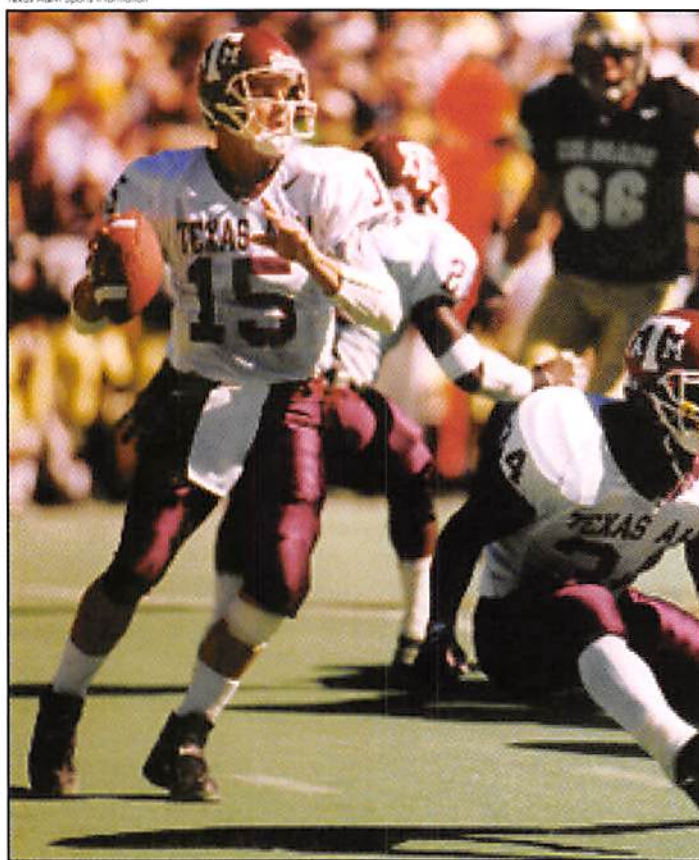
"When we got our eyes beat out by Nebraska (54-15 in the 1997 Big 12 championship game), we said, 'Well, we won the South and know we can do that. Let's set the bar a little higher,'" quarter-

back Randy McCown said. "We did (in 1998), and we won the Big 12 championship. Going into this year,

it's 'We've won the South, and we know we have the ability to win the Big 12 championship. Let's try to win a national championship, as well.'"

McCown is certainly the fiery driving force behind the '99 Aggies and probably the key to their hopes of returning to the Big 12 title game and then to New Orleans. He isn't a particularly pretty passer (66 of 130 for 1,025 yards and six touchdowns last year) or a tremendously gifted runner. But the gritty, hard-nosed senior is the leader of the team and the sparkplug of the offense.

Texas A&M Sports Information



Fiery quarterback Randy McCown is the sparkplug of the A&M offense.

Of course, he has plenty of firepower surrounding him. A&M features an array of talented skill personnel, including three wideouts (Chris Cole, Chris Taylor and Bethel Johnson) with 4.4 speed in the 40, two big running backs (Tiki Hardeman and Ja'Mar Toombs) and an electrifying 1,000-yard rusher (Dante Hall).

The concern on offense is up front, where two starting linemen and two stellar tight ends must be replaced. Chris Valletta will start at left guard in place of Cameron Spikes, while either Shea Holder or Tango McCauley will fill Rex Tucker's space at left tackle.

Although depth is a concern, those changes shouldn't produce a drop-off in performance. The same cannot be said at tight end, where the departure of co-starters Dan Campbell and Derrick Spiller creates a major void.

"Tight end would be our top priority at this time," R.C. Slocum said. "We've got to come up with somebody at that position."

Defensively, A&M must replace three starters who had a total of 132 career starts. Dat Nguyen, the All-American and Lombardi Award winner, is gone from his inside linebacker position where he established a school record with 51 straight starts and 517 tackles. All-Big 12 outside linebacker Warrick Holdman and dependable strong safety Rich Coady will also be sorely missed.

But even with those significant vacancies, defensive coaches suggest that, based on spring drills, this year's defense is ahead of where last year's was at this stage. That's an extremely impressive statement, considering that the 1998 Aggies finished 10th nationally in total defense.

After gaining 968 yards as a sophomore, Dante Hall rushed for 1,024 last year.

"With eight starters back and a lot of depth in the front seven and with some real talented young kids coming in the secondary, it should be a real good year," inside linebackers coach Alan Weddell said following the conclusion of spring drills. "I think we're a better defensive football team today than we were at this time last year."

Toss in an All-American punter in Shane Lechler, an improving place kicker in Russell Bynum and a handful of game-breaking punt and kickoff returners, and the Aggies have all the makings of a special team that could easily make it back to the Big 12 title game.

The question is: Do the Aggies have enough firepower to make it to New Orleans for a shot at the national title?

"I think we have the ability to get there," junior linebacker Cornelius Anthony said. "It's going to be tough, but we've gotten a taste of what's like to play on the big-time, elite level. There was a time when we didn't handle that real well, but we've come a long way."

The Aggies can thank the Nebraska Cornhuskers for that. ■ — *By Rusty Burson*



Texas A&M Sports Information



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 1999 FINISH:

STRENGTHS

A&M returns 18 starters, including both kicking specialists. The Aggies finally proved they could beat quality opponents, going 2-2 against teams ranked in the top three.

WEAKNESSES

A&M must replace the experience and leadership of three defensive starters — **Dat Nguyen**, **Warrick Holdman** and **Rich Coady** — who had a total of 132 career starts. Nguyen started 51 straight games and was involved in an amazing 517 tackles. The Aggies also lost their top two tight ends.

QUARTERBACK DEPTH?

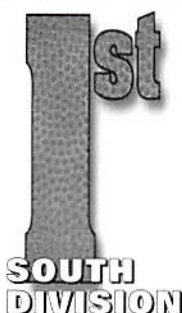
The Aggies failed to solidify the backup quarterback spot, which is critical in light of starter **Randy McCown's** tendency to get hurt and that no other quarterback on campus has thrown a pass in college. Redshirt freshman **Vance Smith** and 24-year-old rookie **Mark Farris**, who played for five seasons in the Pittsburgh Pirates' farm system, battled to a draw in the spring and will continue the competition in the fall.

RUN, RUN, RUN

Ja'Mar Toombs, a big surprise as a freshman, continues to impress as an offensive force at a position that should be very strong if **Tiki Hardeman**, who has 34 career touchdowns, is academically eligible. And tailback **Dante Hall** has rushed for 1,992 yards the past two seasons.

DEFENSIVE STRENGTH

The Aggies finished 10th nationally in total defense (289.3 yards per game) and scoring defense (14.6).



1998 RECORD: 11-3 CONFERENCE FINISH: 7-1

A 31	Florida St.	L, 23-14
S 12	Louisiana Tech	W, 28-7
S 19	@ S. Mississippi	W, 24-6
S 26	North Texas	W, 28-9
O 3	@ Kansas	W, 24-21
O 10	Nebraska	W, 28-21
O 17	@ Baylor	W, 35-14
O 24	Texas Tech	W, 17-10
O 31	@ Oklahoma St.	W, 17-6
N 7	Oklahoma	W, 29-0
N 14	Missouri	W, 17-14
N 27	@ Texas	L, 26-24
D 5	Kansas St.	W, 36-33 (2ot)
J 1	Ohio St.	L, 24-14

(Kickoff Classic, East Rutherford, N.J.)
*Big 12 Championship Game, St. Louis
&Nokia Sugar Bowl, New Orleans

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

SE	Chris Cole	6-0	186	Sr.	LE	Rocky Bernard	6-3	269	Jr.
	Bethel Johnson	6-0	175	So.		Lonnie Madison	6-3	250	So.
RT	Andy Vincent	6-3	301	Sr.	NG	Ron Edwards	6-3	262	Jr.
	Michael Mahan	6-6	285	Fr.		Evan Perroni	6-5	270	So.
RG	Semisi Heimuli	6-2	303	Fr.	RE	Ronald Flemmons	6-5	247	Jr.
	Taylor Whitley	6-5	315	Fr.		Terry Nichols	6-0	253	So.
C	Seth McKinney	6-3	293	So.	OLB	Jason Glenn	6-0	220	Jr.
	Toby McCarthy	6-2	283	Jr.		Christian Rodriguez	6-2	231	So.
LG	Chris Valletta	6-2	306	Jr.	ILB	Cornelius Anthony	6-0	224	Jr.
	Billy Yates	6-3	270	Fr.		Sean Coryatt	6-0	215	Sr.
LT	Shea Holder	6-5	304	Sr.	ILB	Chad Frantzen	6-2	210	Jr.
	Tango McCauley	6-4	290	So.		Amos Simon	6-1	229	So.
TE	Michael de la Torre	6-4	225	Fr.	OLB	Roylin Bradley	6-1	221	Jr.
	RoDerrick Broughton	6-2	266	Jr.		Chris Thierry	6-2	221	Sr.
QB	Randy McCown	6-1	210	Sr.	CB	Jason Webster	5-10	178	Sr.
	Vance Smith	6-5	225	Fr.		Reggie Waddell	5-10	170	Jr.
FL	Leroy Hodge	6-2	204	Sr.	CB	Sedrick Curry	6-2	192	Jr.
	Chris Taylor	5-10	176	Jr.		Jay Brooks	5-9	180	So.
FB	Ja'Mar Toombs	6-1	260	So.	FS	Brandon Jennings	6-1	191	Sr.
	Jesse Hunnicutt	6-4	220	Fr.		Ronald Patton	5-9	192	Jr.
RB	Dante Hall	5-8	190	Sr.	SS	Michael Jameson	5-10	179	Jr.
	Eric Bernard	5-8	190	Sr.		Jeremy Weisinger	6-2	210	Sr.
PK	Russell Bynum	5-9	176	Jr.	P	Shane Lechler	6-2	220	Sr.

Players with starting experience in bold

OKLAHOMA STATE COWBOYS

In coach Bob Simmons' fourth year, Oklahoma State's upstart football program took a downturn.

For that, he shoulders much of the blame.

He scheduled the Cowboys only one home game in their first six, and a 2-4 start left them searching for momentum they never found. One year after finishing 8-4 and reaching the Alamo Bowl, OSU dropped to 5-6.

"If I really had it to do over, I probably wouldn't do it that way," said Simmons, who at the athletic department's urging moved a home game with Nebraska to Kansas City, Mo., for a \$2 million payday. OSU lost 24-17, getting stopped at the 1-yard line on the game's final play.

"That's a lot to ask of your ballclub," the coach continued. "But at the same time, you never want to use that as a crutch. Good teams go on the road and win."

Good programs also suffer lapses.

Comparing OSU to the most publicized turn-arounds in the Big 12 (Kansas State and Colorado), the Cowboys are staying the course. In the four years after KSU hired Bill Snyder, the Wildcats were 18-26. In his fifth and sixth seasons, they went 9-2-1 and 9-3.

In the four years following Bill McCartney's arrival at Colorado, the Buffaloes posted a mark of 14-30-1. Colorado was 6-6 in his fifth season and 7-4 in his sixth.

"We have good enough talent to compete and win in this conference," said Simmons, 22-24 in Stillwater. "We've proven that. But we have to win down the stretch. We can't beat ourselves down the stretch."

Look for the Cowboys to get back on track in 1999.

Standouts such as quarterback Tony Lindsay and line-backer Kenyatta Wright return to a team that really wasn't that far away a year ago. The Cowboys lost by seven points to Nebraska and Texas Tech, and a last-second field goal did them in against Texas.

The wild card, however, could be Lindsay.

Hitting on nearly 62 percent of his passes as a rookie, he last season suffered through a bout of sophomoritis, which affected his touchdown passes (down by two) and completion percentage (down 12 points).

"He was a little bit inconsistent," Simmons said. "We've tried to talk about him just going out and having fun, executing and remembering that he's not the only guy out there."

Lindsay believes he can.

"I've improved most on my reads," the 6-2, 190-pounder said. "I'm more confident in the pocket when I go back to pass."

In addition to passing for 1,442 yards and seven touchdowns, Lindsay rushed for 593 yards and 10 scores.

The Cowboys' other backs are sound, but their running game could be slowed if Nathan Simmons, the coach's son, fails to recover from off-season knee surgery. Simmons, seventh in the league in rushing with 937 yards a year ago, missed spring drills rehabilitating the injury.

If he's unable to go, the bulk of the carries will fall to redshirt freshman Reggie White and junior tailback Jamaal Fobbs, whose playing time dropped last season after he set an OSU freshman rushing record by gaining 846 yards two years ago.

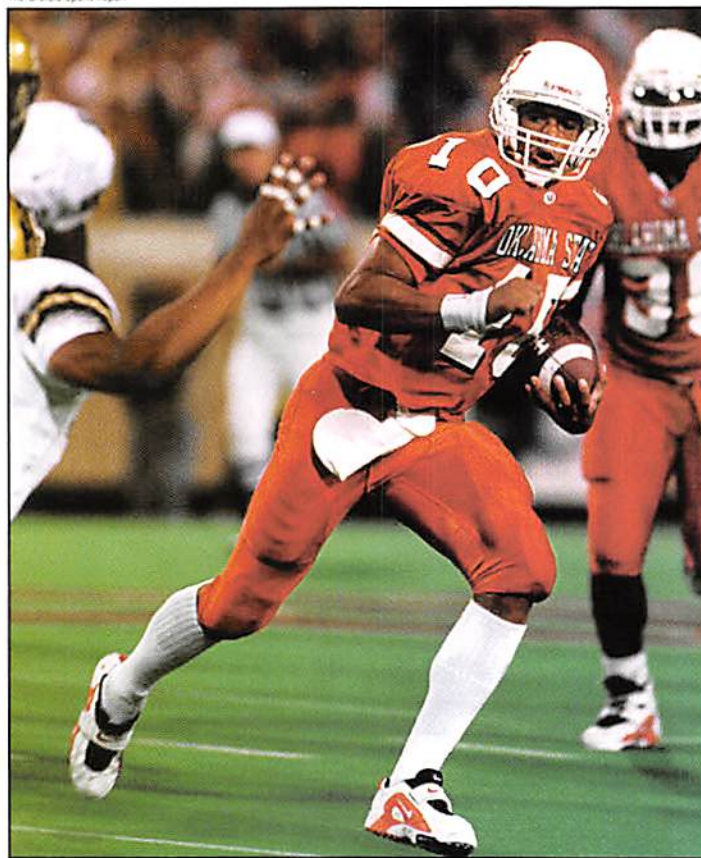
Fobbs did have 534 yards in kickoff returns.

White was the leading rusher in the OSU spring game with 117 yards.

Given Marcellus Rivers return at tight end — the freshman sensation was on academic probation during the spring semester — the Cowboys should see plenty of improvement at receiver.

Joining seniors Terrance Richardson (team-high 25 catches) and Ethan Howell, who averaged an incredible 32 yards on 11 receptions a year ago, will be junior college All-American tight end Bryan Blackwood and a talented cast of

The O-Style Sports Report



Junior quarterback Tony Lindsay is a dual threat. He passed for 1,442 yards and rushed for 593.

redshirt freshmen.

Wright, a second-team all-conference selection, and Tarrell Knauls will lead a defense so stacked at linebacker that it likely will redshirt sack specialist Troy West.

Wright, who calls the signals from his middle linebacker position, is in the best shape of his career.

"He's been in that weight room," OSU defensive coordinator Rob Ryan said of the 6-1, 232-pounder. "He's gotten so much stronger. He can run through blockers this year instead of around them."

Although it lacks an intimidator, the Cowboys defensive line figures to be quicker and more athletic, especially at end.

As a whole, though, OSU has several pressure points.

No one backing up Lindsay has taken a collegiate snap, and the offensive line must fill holes left by three starters. The only senior among the projected offensive line starters is Andrew Golembiewski.

"It all starts up front," OSU offensive coordinator Ron Calcagni said. "We have some guys up there. They just have to win their position."

The Cowboys also must patch up a depleted secondary, which for the second consecutive year was susceptible to the big play. OSU, which ranked 10th in the Big 12 in pass efficiency defense, allowing 2,315 yards and 19 touchdowns, lost its two starting safeties and two top tacklers in Trent Alexander and Ricky Thompson.

To cope with the loss, the Cowboys will move to safety former cornerbacks

Senior Kenyatta Wright leads the Oklahoma State defense from his middle linebacker position.

J.B. Flowers and Adam Edwards and ex-linebacker Justin Thomas (6-3, 235).

Senior Evan Howell (54 tackles, 2 interceptions) is the most experienced player of a cornerback corps that may start redshirt sophomore Marcus Jones at the other cornerback slot. Adding depth will be junior college transfers Jacoby Shepherd and Alvin Porter, who started for OSU as a freshman before losing his academic eligibility.

The Cowboys also hope to find a place in the secondary for Chris Massey, the gem of what many consider Simmons' finest recruiting class. A Parade All-American quarterback and defensive back at Spiro, Okla., Massey was rated the third best schoolboy in the nation by The Sporting News.

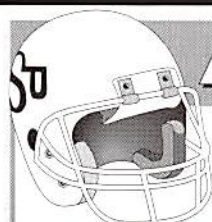
The last Parade All-American to suit up for OSU was R.W. McQuarters, who was so good that he left for the NFL after three seasons.

"Chris Massey has had a lot of publicity," Simmons said. "I think he is a young man that will probably live up to it, too."

The field goal duties will be handled by senior Tim Sydnies, who made 15 of 18 attempts last year and tied for seventh in the conference in scoring. He also kicked 15 field goals as a sophomore. ■ — *By Rhett Morgan*



The O-State Sports Report



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 1999 FINISH:

STRENGTHS:

The Cowboys return 25 seniors — 12 of them starters — and excellent skill position players including junior quarterback **Tony Lindsay**, who had more than 2,000 yards in total offense. OSU is also deep at linebacker, led by senior standout **Kenyatta Wright**.

WEAKNESSES:

The secondary struggled, after the loss of standouts **R.W. McQuarters** and **Kevin Williams**. The Cowboys ranked 80th nationally and 10th in the conference in pass defense, allowing 19 touchdowns.

SECONDARY EVENTS

Junior cornerback **Alvin Porter**, who started as a freshman before having academic difficulties, returned from Fort Scott and looked sharp in the spring. Porter and former wide receiver **Marcus Jones**, a sophomore, both should see plenty of action opposite senior **Evan Howell**. The secondary has a new coach in former Baylor assistant **Mike Cassity**.

BACKUP BLUES

Backup quarterback **Chris Chalupka** transferred to Sam Houston State, and red-shirt sophomore **B.J. Tiger** has never thrown a pass in college. Tiger is an excellent athlete but had a roller-coaster spring.

LINE PROGRESS

Even though the offensive line lost three starters and did not have **Adam Davis**, who was recovering from shoulder surgery in the spring, the unit stabilized with the progress of guard **Bryan Phillips**, center **Reynell Lavigne** and junior college tackle **Kevin Kemp**.

2nd
SOUTH
DIVISION

1998 RECORD: 5-6 CONFERENCE FINISH: 3-5

S 5	@ Kansas	W, 38-28
S 12	@ Tulsa	L, 35-20
S 19	Mississippi St.	W, 42-23
O 3	vs. Nebraska&	W, 38-7
O 10	@ Texas Tech	L, 24-17
O 17	@ Kansas St.	L, 52-20
O 24	Oklahoma	W, 41-26
O 31	Texas A&M	L, 17-6
N 7	@ Texas	L, 37-34
N 14	SW Louisiana	W, 44-20
N 21	Baylor	W, 24-10

&Arrowhead Stadium, Kansas City

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	Terrance Richardson	5-9	180	Sr.	LE	Tanner Bruce	6-4	250	So.
	Cameron White	6-4	180	Sr.		Kevin Williams	6-5	235	Fr.
LT	Kevin Kemp	6-6	300	Jr.	DT	Cortney Mallory	6-1	290	Sr.
	Law, Chamberlain	6-4	340	Jr.		Chris Tyler	6-2	275	So.
LG	Adam Davis	6-4	275	Sr.	DT	Eric Stevenson	6-4	280	Sr.
	Bryan Phillips	6-5	285	So.		Zac Akin	6-1	225	Jr.
C	Reynell Lavigne	6-1	290	Sr.	RE	Zak Warner	6-4	240	Jr.
	Josh Lind	6-6	280	Jr.		Aaron Cudworth	6-0	245	Sr.
RG	Jeff Machado	6-3	275	So.	SLB	Tarrell Knauls	6-1	230	Sr.
	Jason Johnson	6-3	275	So.		Dwayne Levels	6-3	220	So.
RT	A. Golembiewski	6-5	290	Sr.	MLB	Kenyatta Wright	6-1	235	Sr.
	Blaine Cook	6-3	275	Sr.		Jake Riffe	6-2	225	So.
TE	Marcellus Rivers	6-4	225	So.	WLB	Jack Golden	6-1	230	Sr.
	Bryan Blackwood	6-5	250	Jr.		Raymond Cato	6-2	235	Fr.
WR	Ethan Howell	6-1	170	Sr.	CB	Evan Howell	6-1	175	Sr.
	John Lewis	6-1	190	Fr.		Ricklan Holmes	6-1	190	Fr.
QB	Tony Lindsay	6-2	190	Jr.	CB	Marcus Jones	5-9	175	So.
	B.J. Tiger	6-3	195	So.		Alvin Porter	6-0	180	Jr.
TB	Nathan Simmons	5-10	200	Sr.	SS	J.B. Flowers	6-0	185	Sr.
	Jamaal Fobbs	5-10	180	Jr.		Justin Thomas	6-3	235	Jr.
FB	Jeremy Halferty	6-0	225	Sr.	FS	Adam Edwards	6-0	215	Sr.
	Kevin Brown	6-1	260	Sr.		Chris Carter	6-3	215	Sr.
PK	Tim Sydnies	6-2	195	Sr.	P	Scott Elder	6-3	195	So.

Players with starting experience in bold

TEXAS LONGHORNS

Surely Darrell Royal or 1998 Heisman Trophy winner Ricky Williams was in the middle of the mass of burnt orange-wearing humanity. After all, who else could cause hundreds of autograph-seeking fans to recreate a scene straight out of a Beatles newsclip?

But as the mob began to disperse following the Longhorns' Orange-White spring game, it became apparent it wasn't either one of Texas' all-time greats; it was a quarterback. The more surprising fact is it was a quarterback who hasn't even taken a college snap, or for that matter, enrolled.

The object of adulation at Royal-Memorial Stadium in late March was Chris Simms, yes, the son of former NFL All-Pro quarterback Phil Simms. Since the day the USA Today Prep Offensive Player of the Year broke the hearts of Tennessee fans by signing with Texas in February, the 6-foot-5 lefty has attracted quite a cult following.

Crazy as it sounds, some of the talk on the Austin radio stations suggests many would like to see Simms under center when the Horns open the season Aug. 28 against North Carolina State. In fact, there hasn't been this kind of excitement in Austin since... well since last fall when Williams led Texas to a 9-3 record and a 38-11 victory over No. 25-ranked Mississippi State in the Cotton Bowl.

But it wasn't Simms who quarterbacked one of the school's most successful offensive campaigns in school history. That honor falls on sophomore Major Applewhite, who didn't seem intimidated by the circus surrounding Simms. But why should he be? Applewhite proved last year, in leading the Horns to their first major bowl victory since 1982, that it takes a lot to frazzle the slightly built (6-1) 195-pounder.

When starter Richard Walton went down with a broken hand in the second game, Applewhite stepped in and won eight of the next 10 games he started, including a 20-7 win over Nebraska in Lincoln. Along the way to Big 12 "Freshman of the Year" honors, Applewhite threw for a

school-record 10 consecutive 200-yard games and led all freshman nationally in passing efficiency (147.4).

Williams led the nation in rushing (2,124 yards) and finished second in scoring (15.3 points per game). Wide receiver Wane McGarity, Texas' all-time single-season receiving leader, set a UT record with 58 receptions for 1,087 yards.

Unfortunately for second-year head coach Mack Brown, both have taken their production (the two combined for 37

of Texas' 47 touchdowns in '98) and moved on to the NFL. Also gone are first-team All-Big 12 tight end Derek Lewis and four of five starters from the offensive line. In all, Texas lost nine offensive starters.

Unlike last season when Texas was able to hand the ball the Williams and watch records crumble, the Horns plan to be less predictable on offense.

Neither projected tailback starter Hodges Mitchell or Victor Ike had breakout springs. Together they racked up only 38 yards in the spring game, and 26 of those came on one run by Ike at the beginning of the game.

Williams may be gone, but fullback Ricky Brown does return. Texas would like to see his role and carries (10 last year) increase. Brown has solid hands and may flare out

in certain schemes.

After sharing the spotlight last season with McGarity, junior Kwame Cavil will get every defense's best cover man. To free him up Texas plans to move the converted linebacker around and could line him up in the slot. At 6-2, 200, Cavil is a bigger target than McGarity and already has 74 receptions for 1,091 yards and four touchdowns in just two years.

On the offensive line, the hits keep on coming. First Texas had to find bodies to fill in at every position except left guard, where Roger Roesler returns. Then they lost crucial depth when converted tight end Chad Irwin and guard

Texas Sports Information



Junior flanker Kwame Cavil has caught 74 passes for 1,091 yards and four touchdowns in his first two seasons.

Doug Wheeler left the team following spring drills. Despite the reloading, Texas isn't ready to panic.

At 6-6, 350, junior Leonard Davis has the potential to be an All-American (great feet, hands, size, etc.). Davis saw action in every game at left tackle last year, alternating with Octavious Bishop, but has to continue to work on the mental aspect of the game.

Marcel Blanchard was a pleasant surprise in the spring and appears to be the starter at center.

As the offense looks for an identity, Brown will count on his defense to keep Texas in games. While the defense doesn't need as much work, it is not exactly ready to carry the team either. Sure the Horns return nine starters from a year ago, but that group also finished no higher than seventh in any Big 12 team-defense category.

Texas entered spring drills with 10 freshmen and sophomores fighting for starting and second-team spots. Only two projected starters — left end Aaron Humphrey and

right tackle Cedric Woodward — are seniors.

Neither Humphrey, Woodward or left tackle Casey Hampton need ultimatums to push them. Humphrey has been one of the conference's most productive defenders since earning Big 12 "Defensive Newcomer of the Year" honors in 1996. He also led the team in sacks last year with 10.

Texas would like to use a six-man rotation at line-backer, the strongest position on the defense despite the loss of the fifth-leading tackler in Longhorn history, Dusty Renfro.

At the strongside, Tryone Jones and Aaron Babino (missed spring due to academic problems)

should split time. Everick Rawls had such a good string that he has moved to the weakside from the middle.

After sharing time with Babino at strongside last year, Anthony Hicks will move to the middle, pushing De'Andre Lewis back to the weakside with Rawls. Lewis, who began spring drills in the middle, started all 11 games and ranked third on the team with 77 tackles last season. Back-up middle linebacker Adam McConathy, who walked on last year from Louisiana State, was sharp at times and will figure in the rotation.

Texas' best corners may not be on campus. UT will look to its prep class for answers as both Ervis Hill and Joe Walker, who has started 13 games in two years, struggle to be reliable.

The situation at safety isn't quite as bad. At 6-3, 210, Lee Jackson presents matchup problems at safety. Making the most of incumbent Donald McCowen's absence from spring, Jackson proved to coaches he has the tools to avoid many mistakes.

Kris Stockton returns to handle the place-kicking duties after finishing 18th nationally in scoring in 1998. He will no longer have to work on both ends of the field as junior Ryan Long appears ready to handle the punting duties on a full-time basis. ■ — *By Chris Greer*



Texas Sports Information

Kicker Kris Stockton ranked fourth in the Big 12 and 18th nationally in scoring. He booted 16 field goals.



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 1999 FINISH:

3rd

SOUTH DIVISION

STRENGTHS

Major Applewhite was basically ignored last year by defenses and the media. But the guy who didn't even make third-team All-Big 12 is possibly the best returning quarterback in the conference outside of Oklahoma State's Tony Lindsay. Applewhite is a cool customer in the pocket and worked on audibles during the spring. If Texas can protect him and find a legitimate ball carrier, Applewhite could put the Horns in contention for South Division honors.

WEAKNESSES

Texas has to find corner play and a steady rotation up front. The Horns finished 11th in pass efficiency defense last season and didn't show much in the spring to make opponents think things will be different this fall. Look for early tests from North Carolina State, Stanford and Rutgers.

SEEING RED

In all, Texas lost eight players who didn't graduate or fall to grade problems since the Cotton Bowl. The most crucial may be **Adam Dunn**, who saw time at tight end in the spring but moved back to quarterback for the final scrimmage. Dunn, a second-round draft choice of the Cincinnati Reds last year, opted for baseball after reportedly becoming disgruntled with lack of playing time behind **Major Applewhite**. Dunn's departure left Applewhite as the only scholarship quarterback on campus during the spring semester.

TOP RECRUITING CLASS

Texas's recruiting class, led by quarterback Chris Simms of Franklin Lakes (Ramapo), N.J., and defensive end Corey Redding of Galena Park (North Shore), Texas, was rated No. 1 by most recruiting services.

1998 RECORD: 9-3 CONFERENCE FINISH: 6-2

S 5	New Mexico St.	W, 66-36
S 12	@ UCLA	L, 49-31
S 19	@ Kansas St.	L, 48-7
S 26	Rice	W, 59-21
O 3	Iowa St.	W, 54-33
O 10	Oklahoma%	W, 34-3
O 24	Baylor	W, 30-20
O 31	@ Nebraska	W, 20-16
N 7	Oklahoma St.	W, 37-34
N 14	@ Texas Tech	L, 42-35
N 27	Texas A&M	W, 26-24
J 1	Mississippi St.&	W, 38-11

%Cotton Bowl, Dallas, Texas
&Southwestern Bell Cotton Bowl, Dallas, Texas

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

FL	Kwame Cavil	6-2	200	So.	LE	Aaron Humphrey	6-3	255	Sr.
	Jamel Thompson	6-0	180	Jr.		Maurice Gordan	6-1	225	So.
LT	Leonard Davis	6-6	350	Jr.	LT	Casey Hampton	6-1	300	Jr.
	Chad Irwin	6-3	252	So.		Aaron Colvin	6-4	250	So.
LG	Roger Roessler	6-5	300	Sr.	RT	Cedric Woodward	6-3	280	Sr.
	Corey Bradford	6-1	296	So.		Shaun Rogers	6-4	305	Jr.
C	Marcel Blanchard	6-4	300	Jr.	RE	Jermain Anderson	6-3	207	So.
	Matt Anderson	6-4	300	So.		J.J. Kelly	6-2	237	Jr.
RG	Antwan Kirk-Hughes	6-3	320	So.	SLB	Tyrone Jones	6-4	210	So.
	Matt Anderson	6-4	300	So.		Jamel Joyner	6-2	180	Fr.
RT	Cory Quye	6-6	315	Jr.	MLB	De'Andre Lewis	6-1	225	So.
	Mike Williams	6-6	339	So.		Josh Spoerl	6-1	240	Jr.
TE	Chris Smith	6-5	252	Jr.	WLB	Marcus Wilkins	6-2	215	So.
	Mike Jones	6-4	245	So.		Everick Rawls	6-1	218	So.
QB	Major Applewhite	6-1	195	So.	LCB	Ervis Hill	5-9	178	So.
	Chris Simms	6-5	210	Fr.		Everick Rawls	6-1	216	So.
TB	Hodges Mitchell	5-7	190	Jr.	FS	Quentin Jammer	6-1	180	Jr.
	Victor Ike	5-11	189	Fr.		Greg Brown	6-2	200	Jr.
FB	Ricky Brown	6-0	222	Sr.	SS	Donald McCowen	6-0	205	Jr.
	Chris Robertson	6-1	196	So.		Lee Jackson	6-3	193	So.
SE	Ryan Nunez	5-9	174	Sr.	CB	Joe Walker	6-0	175	Jr.
	Montrell Flowers	5-9	175	Fr.		Chris Butcher	6-0	191	Sr.
PK	Kris Stockton	5-9	185	Jr.	P	Ryan Long	6-1	190	Jr.

Players with starting experience in bold

TEXAS TECH RED RAIDERS

Sometimes you've just got to feel sorry for Texas Tech. No matter how hard the Red Raiders try, fate just seems to always stop them for no gain.

Take last year for example. Spike Dykes' squad raced to a 6-0 start, including a convincing 24-17 win over Oklahoma State, making Tech the first bowl eligible team in the Big 12. Tailback Ricky Williams (yeah, the other one) was eyeing a 2,000-yard season after eclipsing the century mark in those six wins. Attendance had even started to pick up. Life was good in Lubbock, Texas.

That's when fate came on a blitz.

Tech lost four of its next five games, including a heart-breaking loss to turmoil-plagued Oklahoma in the season finale. Williams finished with 1,582, and Tech's dreams of a BCS bid were replaced with a Dec. 31 appearance against Mississippi in the Independence Bowl. For those of you scoring at home, they also lost that game (35-18).

"You've got to build on the positives, not the negatives," said Dykes prior to spring practice. "No one gets better dwelling on what's happened. We were just a little unlucky. Hopefully that will change this year."

Days later, fate racked up another sack when projected starting quarterback Rob Peters underwent surgery to repair a broken thumb suffered in the 1998 season opener. The offense was temporarily placed in the hands of redshirt freshman Kliff Kingsbury during spring drills.

With eight full/part-time starters (including Peters) returning, Tech already had plenty of questions to answer on offense. But with many of the cogs missing from spring, Tech will have to wait until fall for final jeopardy and Peters' return.

One area that needs to be addressed is turnovers. After leading the NCAA for five years (1993-97) in turnover mar-

gin, the Raiders finished minus-6 last season. Poor reads, bad decisions and horrible luck cost the Raiders, who lost four games by 14 points. All the more reason Peters needed to be healthy in the spring.

At times, Peters looked like he could do no wrong in 1998, when he replaced four-year starter Zebbie Lethridge. Just ask Texas. Passing for 322 yards and two touchdowns, the gutsy 6-foot-3, 229-pounder dived in for the game winning touchdown to break a three-game losing skid. But a

week later against Oklahoma, he was ineffective and replaced.

After two years of being "that other Williams guy," Tech's Williams is going to get the chance to become the league's predominant back. A Big 12 back has led the nation in rushing the last three years. Williams could very easily keep that streak alive. What could keep him from that goal or from getting the 1,425 yards needed to become the school's all-time leading rusher, is the lack of weapons at Tech.

Tech welcomes back a familiar face at fullback as senior Sammy Morris appears to have passed junior Jonathan Hawkins (a starter for the last year and a half) at fullback.

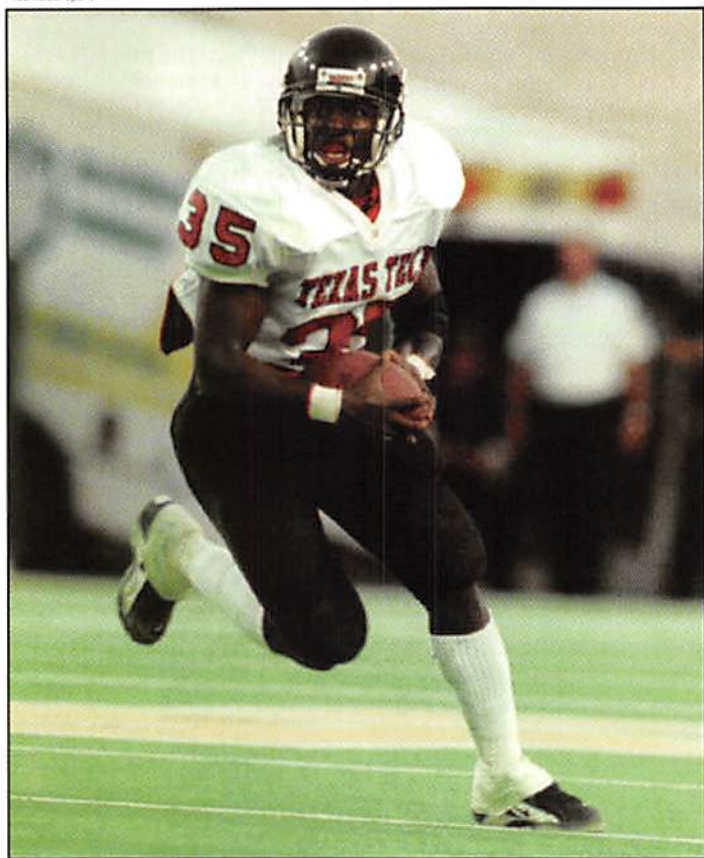
As deep as Tech is at running back, the opposite is true at receiver.

Dykes must find a replacement for Donnie Hart, who finished as Tech's second-leading receiver in receptions and yards. That's an issue that doesn't

appear to be close to resolved.

Derek Dorris, a starter at flanker who caught 28 balls for 395 yards a year ago, worked well with Hart on the other side, but can he be the primary target in Tech's offset offense?

Tech would like to get its tight ends more involved in the offense, especially because of the lack of experience at the wideouts. One reason for the new direction is that



"That other" Ricky Williams needs 1,425 yards to become Tech's all-time leading rusher. He gained 1,582 as a sophomore.

senior starter Kyle Allamon has improved his route running and showed better hands in the spring.

Three players — guard Curtis Lowery and tackles Steve McFadden and Jonathan "The House" Gray — return on the offensive line. After a lackluster spring, McFadden was passed by sophomore Matt Heider at right tackle. Lowery is still solid on the left and a slimmed down (down to 345 from last season's 365) Gray should be a bona fide all-conference candidate next to him.

Sure Tech has put together some impressive offensive assaults over the years, but it's defense that Dykes builds his teams around. This year will be no different, as six starters and a host of experienced players look to improve on last year's No. 8 national ranking in total defense.

The reloading job begins at the ends, where only one

half of the sack-crazy duo of All-American Montae Reagor and Taurus Rucker return. Right end Rucker will step into Reagor's position as leader and playmaker. Rucker played the supporting role to Reagor well, but it will now be junior Devin Lemons who inherits big shoes at left end.

While the ends appear solid, the same can't be said for the interior of the line. Just as last year when Tech had to replace three players, bodies and experience must be found.

End may be the deepest defensive position, but it's at linebacker that Tech appears the strongest. Ty Ardoin and Kevin McCullar will be missed but only if you blink. With

middle linebacker Kyle Shipley running the show for a second year, Tech seemed to swarm to the ball faster in the spring than the unit did last fall.

With a little chemistry and luck, the secondary may not be as big an Achilles heel as it appears on paper.

A spring experiment involving the move of junior John Norman from free safety to Raiderback met with various degrees of success.

Returning starter Oscar Solis has taken a lot of heat over the last couple of years, but hasn't shown any quit — a trait that hasn't gone unnoticed by coaches.

Both kickers — place-kicker Chris Birkholz and punter Brian Roberson — return. Birkholz connected on 16-of-21 field goals and all 23 PATs. He was rewarded for his play with a scholarship in the spring.

If Tech hopes to juke fate in 1999 and return to a bowl game for the sixth time in seven years, it will have to come out of the gate ready to play. Tech opens the season on the road at Arizona State. The Raiders will also open league play on Oct. 2 when defending Big 12 champion Texas A&M pays a visit to Lubbock. Road games at Oklahoma State, Missouri and Texas will also make Tech prove its mettle. ■ — *By Chris Greer*



Red Raider Sports

Junior Devin Lemons will try to fill the big shoes of All-American Montae Reagor at left defensive end.



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 1999 FINISH:

4th
SOUTH DIVISION

STRENGTHS

Six starters and a host of experienced players return from a unit that had an impressive No. 8 national ranking in total defense.

WEAKNESSES

The Raiders finished minus-6 last season in turnover margin. Poor reads, bad decisions and horrible luck cost the Raiders, who lost four games by a total of 14 points and five of their last six after a 6-0 start.

CALLING OTHER QUARTERBACKS

With **Rob Peters** missing the entire spring recovering from an injury, coaches looked for help at quarterback. **Kliff Kingsbury**, the only other scholarship quarterback on campus, didn't have a great spring but looked sharp in the Red-Black game connecting on 9-of-14 passes for 143 yards. At 5-foot-8, **David Kelley**, the second stringer in the spring, has trouble throwing from the pocket and doesn't have the speed to rollout.

FUTURE STAR

As if Tech wasn't already dangerous, Coach **Spike Dykes** will let prep phenom **Shaud Williams** try to earn playing time in the crowded backfield after arriving in the fall. The Texas 4A class record holder in career rushing yards with 7,710 is already a star in Dykes' eyes. "He's a guy that is destined for stardom," Dykes said. "He's a guy that's going to have a great legacy here at Tech."

MAY RETURNS

After not seeing game action since 1996 when he broke his right leg and ankle in a California prep all-star game, sophomore **Jason May** used the spring to win the start at right guard.

1998 RECORD: 7-5

CONFERENCE FINISH: 4-4

S 5	Texas-El Paso	W, 35-3
S 12	@ North Texas	W, 30-0
S 19	Fresno St.	W, 34-28
S 26	@ Iowa St.	W, 31-24
O 3	Baylor	W, 31-29
O 10	Oklahoma St.	W, 24-17
O 17	@ Colorado	L, 19-17
O 24	@ Texas A&M	L, 17-10
O 31	Missouri	L, 28-26
N 14	Texas	W, 42-35
N 21	@ Oklahoma	L, 20-17
D 31	Mississippi	L, 35-18

@Sanford Independence Bowl

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

TE	Kyle Allamon	6-3 256 Sr.	LE	Devin Lemons	6-3 220 Jr.
	Tim Winn	6-4 249 Sr.		Aaron Hunt	6-2 225 Fr.
LT	Jonathan Gray	6-5 357 Jr.	NT	Terrt Patton	6-2 284 Sr.
	Paul Erickson	6-4 279 So.		Josh Page	6-2 265 Fr.
LG	Curtis Lowery	6-5 327 Sr.	DT	Kris Kocurek	6-5 290 Jr.
	John DePasquale	6-4 299 Jr.		Detwill Williams	6-3 236 So.
C	Kyle Sanders	6-2 305 Jr.	RE	Taurus Rucker	6-0 252 Sr.
	Antony Patricia	6-2 298 Sr.		Zeno McCoy	6-5 220 Fr.
RG	Jason May	6-4 299 So.	SLB	Keith Cockrum	6-2 205 Sr.
	Dan Martin	6-4 318 Sr.		Dorian Pitts	6-4 207 Jr.
RT	Matt Heider	6-5 306 So.	MLB	Kyle Shipley	6-2 230 Sr.
	Steve McFadden	6-4 328 Jr.		Rusty Bucy	6-1 225 Fr.
SE	Tim Baker	6-5 202 Jr.	WLB	Tim Duffie	5-11 227 Sr.
	Darrell Jones	6-2 197 So.		Will Culppepper	6-2 235 Jr.
FL	Derek Dorris	6-2 195 Jr.	R	Reagan Bownds	5-10 185 Sr.
	Dee Jackson	6-2 199 Jr.		John Norman	6-1 210 Jr.
QB	Rob Peters	6-3 229 Sr.	LC	Anthony Malbrough	5-19 185 Sr.
	Kliff Kingsbury	6-4 185 Fr.		Antwan Alexander	6-0 185 Jr.
TB	Ricky Williams	5-9 190 Jr.	RC	Oscar Solis	5-8 189 Sr.
	Rickey Hunter	5-11 188 Jr.		Derrick Briggs	5-10 168 Jr.
FB	Sammy Morris	6-0 220 Sr.	FS	Kevin Curtis	6-2 195 So.
	Toby Shain	5-11 215 Fr.		Anthony Terrell	5-10 170 So.
PK	Chris Birkholz	6-0 187 Jr.	P	Brian Roberson	6-2 189 Sr.

Players with starting experience in bold

OKLAHOMA SOONERS

To fully gauge just how far the Oklahoma football program has fallen, one only needed to look at the newspapers, listen to talk radio or saddle up next to die-hards at a local watering hole in the spring. Instead of football, conversation centered on sophomore Ryan Humphrey's decision to transfer.

And he's a basketball player.

Hoops talk in the spring? Blasphemy. Speaking of Dr. James Naismith's invention while the gridiron heroes stretched on the practice field used to be unfathomable in the Sooner state. But putting up as many bricks as the football program has in the last 10 years can change even the staunchest supporter's mindset. Miscues, penalties, probation, bad hires and ineptitude have reduced Oklahoma from football giant to laughing stock.

Last season served as the finale to one of the nation's best running sitcoms. Unlike *Seinfeld*, nobody seemed to care. Installing a gimmick wishbone offense with a converted defensive back running the show only made matters worse. In the end, there was no curtain call. Instead, third-year Coach John Blake was fired following the 5-6 campaign, and the program's best player, tailback De'Mond Parker, turned pro.

To revitalize the show, Oklahoma secured the talents of the nation's hottest assistant coach, Bob Stoops. His job: Turn Oklahoma into an action adventure and get ratings back.

It won't take a conference championship to win over the success-starved Oklahoma fans, but coming out on top in more than just five games may be necessary. With 17 starters returning and a young, energetic staff pushing the buttons, Oklahoma doesn't appear to be far away from competing for the South Division title. It could even happen this year.

Getting away from option football, Stoops is installing an offense that mirrors the high-powered balanced attack Kentucky utilized the last couple of years. To keep the learning curve to a minimum, he hired UK and BYU mastermind, Mike Leach, to serve as offensive coordinator. Getting OU fans to buy into a passing game is one thing, finding someone to run it is another.

Brandon Daniels, a part-time starter in '98 has moved to receiver, and the backups will probably serve the same role this year. OU is counting on Juco transfer John Heupel to pull the trigger and improve on the Sooners' 107 national ranking in passing offense. The 6-foot-2 lefty, a first-team NJCCA All-American from Snow (Ephraim, Utah) Junior College, enrolled in January and took the majority of the snaps this spring. No stranger to a multiple scheme, Heupel passed for 2,308 yards and 28 touchdowns last season.

Former walkon Patrick Fletcher will likely backup Heupel in the fall after showing that despite his size, 5-10, 167 pounds, he can function in the new scheme. Padding his hand, Stoops signed three prep signal-callers.

Despite the early departure of Parker (the Sooners' leading rusher the last three years) to the NFL, there appears to be plenty of able, but untested, bodies in the backfield.

Oklahoma doesn't need a 1,000-yard rusher to be successful, but will look to Michael Thornton, Johnnie Balous, Josh Norman and Seth Littrell to add more facets to their games. Thornton had the best spring and appears to be Parker's successor.

After a strong spring, it looks like Daniels may have finally found a home. Switching to receiver, Daniels is making his fourth position change in as many

years. He started his Oklahoma career at receiver before moving to defensive back and then quarterback last year. After completing only 16-of-40 passes for 256 yards, he happily accepted the position switch.

Replacing Jason Freeman at tight end will be Matt Anderson and Chris Hammons.

There may be no offensive position stocked better than the group up front. Of course, this is the same unit that went through more makeovers than Courtney Love in 1998. Whether that's a plus or a minus is yet to be determined.

Left tackle Scott Kempenich could retain his starting

Oklahoma Sports Information



Linebacker Rocky Calmus stepped right in as a true freshman. He had 11 tackles for losses.

position provided he returns from knee surgery. After missing the season opener with a broken foot, Kempenich suffered a torn ACL in the fourth game. Adam Carpenter, who started the season at left guard, was also lost in the Colorado game and never returned.

Though he wasn't considered a full-time starter, Bubba Burcham saw time at every position on the line. Matt O'Neal is steady at center and Stockar McDougale should return to right tackle. Jay Smith, the injury-cursed veteran who was granted a medical hardship, will give solid relief at guard or tackle while taking orders from his fifth offensive coordinator in six years.

At Florida, then defensive coordinator Bob Stoops caught the eye of Oklahoma officials with his Stun-n-Done defense. In each of his three seasons with the Gators, his squad ranked in the nation's top 15 in total defense. While serving in the same capacity at Kansas State (1989-95), his unit led the nation in total defense in 1995.

Stoops' press defense starts with disrupting opponents at the line of scrimmage. That task will be harder due to the graduation of the Sooners' best defensive player, Kelly Gregg. Co-defensive coordinator Brent Venables realizes Gregg's intangibles can't be replaced but feels good about the returners including Ryan Fischer, Jeremy Wilson-Guest, Cornelius Burton and Frank Romero.

A big reason for optimism is that the linebacking corps is as strong a position as the Sooners have. Rocky Calmus was

as good as advertised as a true freshman, and Michael Dulaney was better than most schools thought.

Onte Jones has moved from weakside linebacker to fill Gana Joseph's strong safety position.

One area that didn't appear to improve during the spring was the kicking game — a sore spot for many years at Oklahoma.

A walkon, Matt Reeves came through when pressed into duty during the Cal game, hitting two field goals. From 35 yards in, he gave the Sooners a comfort level. When not battling mononucleosis, Jeff Ferguson was fighting inconsistency and will probably be forced to handle the punting chores instead of PATs.

OU will get a quick trial by fire in Stoops' first year as the Sooners face seven teams that made it to bowl games last year. Oklahoma is the only Big 12 team to face as many. Unlike Schnellenberger, who promised "they will write books and make movies about what we accomplish" when he followed Gibbs in 1995, Stoops has very deliberately backed off making bold predictions.

"I believe you can't blow smoke until you have a fire," he said. "Obviously we plan on winning every game and contending for league and national titles, but I don't know that it will happen this year." ■ — *By Chris Greer*



Oklahoma Sports Information

Senior Michael Thornton had a good spring and appears to be the successor to tailback De'Mond Parker, who turned pro after his junior season.



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 1999 FINISH:

5th
SOUTH DIVISION

STRENGTHS:

The linebacking corps is as strong a position as the Sooners have. Coaches think this group isn't far away from being compared to the unit Kansas State employed last year en route to the Big 12 championship game.

WEAKNESSES:

The Sooners finished 101st nationally in both total offense (293.27 yards per game) and scoring offense (16.7 points per game). The kicking game has been a sore spot for many years.

REPLACING PARKER

De'Mond Parker, who rushed for 1,077 yards last season and was OU's leading rusher the last three years, left early for the NFL, leaving the Sooners with talented but untested bodies in the backfield. "It sure would have been nice watching him catch a little ball in the flat and taking off," new offensive coordinator Mike Leach said. "But we'll find guys who can be successful for us."

A DIFFERENT OKLAHOMA

It didn't take long for the coaching staff to make its intentions known. In Oklahoma's first major scrimmage, the offense rushed only 14 times and put the ball in the air 49 times. Junior college All-American Josh Heupel, showing early polish, accounted for 359 yards and four touchdowns by completing 20-of-27 passes.

RECEIVERS MAKE STRIDES

Three redshirt freshmen — Andre Woolfork, Damien Mackey and DaWight Benning — all made great strides at wide receiver to give essential depth to the position.

1998 RECORD: 5-6 CONFERENCE FINISH: 3-5

S 5	North Texas	W, 37-9
S 12	@ TCU	W, 10-9
S 19	California	L, 13-12
O 3	Colorado	L, 27-25
O 10	vs. Texas#	L, 34-3
O 17	@ Missouri	L, 20-6
O 24	@ Oklahoma St.	L, 41-26
O 31	Iowa St.	W, 17-14
N 7	@ Texas A&M	L, 29-0
N 14	@ Baylor	W, 28-16
N 21	Texas Tech	W, 20-17

Cotton Bowl, Dallas, TX

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

SE	Andre Woolfork	6-1 184 Fr.	LE	Frank Romero	6-3 263 So.
	Curtis Fagan	5-11 184 Fr.		Beau Hodges	6-2 239 Fr.
LT	Scott Kempenich	6-6 312 Jr.	LT	Bary Holleyman	6-4 269 So.
	Jay Smith	6-3 279 Sr.		Darryl Bright	6-4 269 Jr.
LG	Adam Carpenter	6-3 304 Jr.	RT	Greg Muhammad	5-11 254 So.
	Ryan Allen	6-2 247 Sr.		Sedric Jones	6-2 254 Sr.
C	Matt O'Neal	6-3 262 Sr.	RE	Cornelius Burton	6-5 275 Sr.
	Josh Smith	6-1 268 Fr.		Sedric Jones	6-2 254 Sr.
RG	Jason Bronson	6-3 272 So.	SLB	Brandon Moore	6-1 223 Jr.
	Reese Travis	6-1 261 Jr.		Anthony Davis	6-0 218 Sr.
RT	Stockar McDougale	6-5 354 Sr.	MLB	Rocky Calmus	6-3 228 So.
	Will Mathis	6-2 250 Sr.		Michael Dulaney	6-1 225 So.
TE	Matt Anderson	6-3 240 Sr.	WLB	Armand Spence	6-0 237 Jr.
	Chris Hammons	6-3 244 Jr.		Nick Simpson	6-0 210 So.
QB	Josh Heupel	6-2 205 Jr.	LCB	Mike Woods	5-10 188 Sr.
	Patrick Fletcher	5-10 167 Jr.		William Bartee	6-1 200 Jr.
HB	Michael Thornton	5-5 187 Sr.	SS	Onte Jones	5-9 191 Jr.
	Reggie Skinner	5-8 202 Sr.		Rodney Rideau	6-1 191 Sr.
FB	Seth Little	5-10 213 Jr.	FS	William Bartee	6-1 200 Jr.
	Brandon Daniels	5-10 207 Sr.		Rodney Rideau	6-1 191 Sr.
FL	Jarrall Jackson	5-9 193 Sr.	RCB	Pee Wee Woods	5-8 178 Sr.
	Damien Mackey	5-11 188 Fr.		William Bartee	6-1 200 Jr.
PK	Matt Reeves	5-9 180 Sr.	P	Jeff Ferguson	6-0 170 So.

Players with starting experience in bold

BAYLOR BEARS

Kevin Steele knows first hand that "speed kills" isn't just a motto from your friendly highway patrol meant to keep heavy, impatient feet off the accelerator. He's seen too many victims in his 41 years.

Teenage men in the prime of their lives have been victims. Grass stains, blood-soaked jerseys and tears are some of its side effects.

As an assistant at Nebraska, Steele saw first-hand how a well developed yet aggressive, blitzing 4-3 defensive scheme can take a team from also-ran to champion.

"Speed allows you to make mistakes and cover them up," said Steele, who takes over the reigns at Big 12 cellar dweller Baylor after Dave Roberts was shown the locker room door following back-to-back 2-9 seasons.

Anxious Baylor fans hope it works as they have sat through too many Saturday disasters.

Steele learned from Nebraska defensive coordinator Charlie McBride, who in the early-1990s instituted the change from a bend-don't-break plodding defense to the attack made famous by the Sunshine State schools, that teams don't necessarily have to have the most talented athletes defensively to be successful, but they must be able to run.

"If you have seven or eight show up at the ball, they'll make the play," said Steele, who coached at Nebraska from 1989-95 and then with the NFL's Carolina Panthers from 1995-98.

Steele inherited a squad lacking in confidence and leadership. Finishing dead last in the Big 12 in both total offense and total defense (106th and 101st nationally) as the Bears did last year has a funny way of doing that to a team. So before tape was watched or pads were put on, he and his staff attacked the mental approach of the squad. They worked on self-discipline and getting the players' minds working in the right direction. "We have to learn how to not beat ourselves," he said. "You can't beat anybody else if you beat yourself."

One of the first to buy into Steele's attitude was junior quarterback Odell James.

Coming out of Aldine (MacArthur) High School in 1996, James was considered one of the nation's top option quarterbacks. But knee problems and getting into Roberts' dog-house did nothing but erode James' once confident (some say cocky) attitude. He started the first four games in 1998, rushing for a touchdown in each of the first two, before giving way to Jermaine Alfred.

Getting his first start since 1996, Alfred threw for a career-high 288 yards against Kansas in the Bears' final win of the year. (James led Baylor to a 33-30 upset victor over nationally ranked N.C. State in week two.)

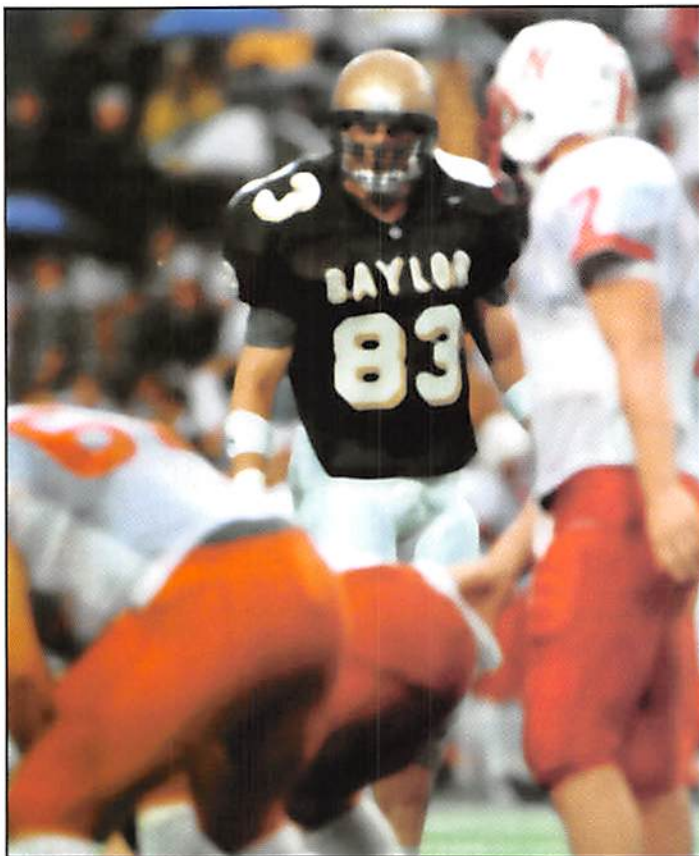
Steele plans to install a balanced attack that can not only run the ball physically but also have a third-down passing game with two and three wides. Adding to the drama, Baylor will call plays based on each quarterback's strength and will also line up in two-back sets. "It will be like the Dallas Cowboys when Jimmy Johnson was there."

Instead of Emmitt Smith and Darryl Johnston, Steele will have to rely on juniors tailback Darrell Bush and fullback Derek Lagway.

After breaking Baylor's freshman rushing record in 1997 (693 yards in nine games), Bush went polar opposite last season gaining only 357 yards — a good reason why the Bears finished last in the conference in rushing offense with 110.4 yards a game.

It was a free-for-all at receiver this spring as Baylor is looking for as much talent as possible after losing three of the top four from a year ago. Andra Fuller missed time this spring while competing in track. Also MIA due to track commitments were Randy Davis and Martin Dossett.

Some of the credit for the development of Alfred and James has to go to the offensive line. It was just hard to figure out which guys to thank during the spring because they were shuffled almost daily to different spots. When spring



Baylor will look for improvement from its defensive line, including returning starter and three-year letterman Justin Snow.

finished sophomore Joe Jackson had held onto his starting job at center. The guards appear to be Ethan Kelley on the left side and Derrick Percy, who moved from center, or Chris Watton on the right. Greg Jerman returns at left tackle and converted defensive lineman Tyshaun Whitson will anchor the strong side.

To maximize the defensive attack, the Bears will operate out of a 4-3 instead of a 50 front. Steele plans to keep the scheme simple, so much "that it can get boring."

Tackle James Calvin suffered a knee injury in the first scrimmage and missed the rest of the drills. Nose tackle Ronald Smith also spent time in the trainer's room after chipping a bone in his thumb. Both are expected to be healthy by fall. Steele can only pray that happens as even with those two, plus ends Dwight Johnson and returning starter Justin Snow, the line will be the weak link on defense.

To get his most versatile players closer to the line Steele moved Rodney Smith from his strong safety position to weakside linebacker in the spring. The gamble made Steele look like a Vegas veteran.

If there was an MVP in the spring game it was Smith. The senior returned a pick 80 yards for a score, blocked a field-goal attempt, caused a fumble and returned two kickoffs for 47 yards. By adding kickoff returns to his resume, Smith may be the only linebacker in the country doing so next year.

Also moving from the secondary to linebacker is Kyle Williams who will see time in the middle behind junior Kris Micheaux. After finishing 1998 as the third

Cornerback Robert Neal, shown knocking a pass away from a Michigan receiver, started five games as a junior. He is the projected starter at left corner.

stringer at the weakside, Jason Jackson has moved to strongside where he will battle converted outside linebacker Andre Taylor. McKinley Bowie, a starter at strongside will spell Smith on the other side.

Robert Neal, who started five games last year before heading to the bench, will start at left corner with Baxter holding down the right spot. Seniors Curtis Henderson and Sean Armistead will get the nods at strong and free safety, respectively. The "baby" of the bunch, Baxter probably had the best year of the group in 1998 as sophomore with 45 tackles and a Big 12-best 18 pass deflections.

One of the few positions Steele doesn't have to worry about is punter where senior Kyle Atteberry returns. Atteberry finished third in the conference in punting with a 43.26 yards-per-boot average. If a replacement can't be found for departed place-kicker Matt Bryant, Atteberry may see double duty.

It was a hectic spring for Steele, but he was able to get a decent understanding of the cards he's been dealt.

"The program is not broken. There's talent to win with at Baylor University," Steele said. "We're a long, long way away. I don't know how long it will take. If we get better, we'll get it done." ■ — *By Chris Greer*



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 1999 FINISH:

STRENGTHS:

Former Nebraska and NFL assistant **Kevin Steele** brings new ideas and optimism to a program that has suffered through back-to-back 2-9 seasons.

WEAKNESSES:

The Bears finished last in the conference in rushing offense (110.4 yards per game) and total offense (276.82).

QUARTERBACK QUESTION

The quarterbacks opened spring the same way they ended last fall — **Jermaine Alfred** No. 1 and **Odell James** holding a clipboard. By the second major scrimmage of the spring, it was James who was looking like the starter. Showing maturity that many of his teammates hadn't seen, James avoided sacks by throwing short passes or dumping the ball to backs instead of trying to escape by flight. Neither looked sharp in the spring game, with Alfred completing 4-of-14 for 98 yards, two touchdowns and a pick. James finished going 2-of-7 for 10 yards, one score and two interceptions.

RUN DEFENSE BETTER, BUT . . .

A product of the old Big Eight, Steele knows to win in this league teams must be able to stop the run. Giving up 214.1 yards a game as Baylor did last year isn't going to cut it. Even that was an improvement from 1997, when the Bears allowed 275.3 rushing yards per game.

OVER BEFORE IT STARTED

Redshirt freshman tailback **Ben Gay**, who was suspended in the spring, was dismissed in May. Coach Kevin Steele told the Waco Tribune-Herald that it was a private issue that "needs to stay in house."

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1998 RECORD: 2-9 CONFERENCE FINISH: 1-7

S 12	@ Oregon St.	L, 27-17
S 19	N. Carolina St.	W, 33-30
S 26	@ Colorado	L, 18-16
O 3	@ Texas Tech	L, 31-29
O 10	Kansas	W, 31-24
O 17	Texas A&M	L, 35-14
O 24	@ Texas	L, 30-20
O 31	@ Notre Dame	L, 27-3
N 7	Kansas St.	L, 49-6
N 14	Oklahoma	L, 28-16
N 21	@ Oklahoma St.	L, 24-10

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

TE	Brandon Thompson	6-2	256	Jr.	LE	Justin Snow	6-3	246	Sr.
	Andrew Obriotti	6-2	234	So.		Fred Rogers	6-1	267	Sr.
LT	Greg Jerman	6-5	281	So.	DT	James Calvin	6-1	285	Sr.
	Chad Crady	6-4	281	Fr.		Ryan Gillenwater	6-1	288	So.
LG	Ethan Kelly	6-2	296	Fr.	DT	Dwight Johnson	6-4	276	Jr.
	Demetrio Phillips	6-3	279	So.		Travis Hicks	6-2	286	Fr.
C	Joe Jackson	6-2	286	So.	RE	Eddrick Brooks	6-2	247	Sr.
	Jon Erickson	6-4	283	So.		Charles Mann	6-2	247	Fr.
RG	Chris Watton	6-3	306	So.	SLB	Jason Jackson	6-0	233	Sr.
	Everett Fraser	6-5	293	Fr.		Andre Taylor	6-1	239	Sr.
RT	Tyshaun Whitson	6-5	304	Jr.	MLB	Kris Micheaux	6-1	256	Jr.
	David Armstrong	6-5	281	So.		Eric Clay	6-1	241	Jr.
QB	Jermaine Alfred	6-1	220	Sr.	WLB	Rodney Smith	6-2	221	Sr.
	Odell James	6-3	226	Jr.		McKinley Bowie	6-0	240	Jr.
TB	Darrell Bush	5-8	189	Jr.	CB	Robert Neal	5-9	197	Sr.
	Elijah Burkins	5-7	198	Sr.		Daniel Wilturner	6-7	176	Jr.
FB	Derek Lagway	6-1	248	Jr.	FS	Sean Armistead	6-2	189	Sr.
	Melvin Barnett	6-0	251	So.		Samir Al-Amin	6-0	207	Jr.
WR	Andra Fuller	5-10	171	So.	SS	Curtis Henderson	5-9	202	Sr.
	Bobby Darnell	5-11	183	Fr.		Tommie Black	6-0	209	Jr.
WR	Lanny O'Steen	5-11	178	Fr.	CB	Gary Baxter	6-1	198	Jr.
	Ryan Chapdelaine	6-0	181	So.		Allen Pace	5-9	169	Jr.
PK	Kyle Atteberry	6-0	174	Sr.	P	Kyle Atteberry	6-0	174	Sr.

Players with starting experience in bold

NONCONFERENCE OPPONENTS

It's almost as if Hayden Fry had never left. When Kirk Ferentz replaced the long-time Iowa football legend last December, he promised to return the Hawkeyes to the glory days of the 1980s, when the school year in and year out was a contender for the Big 10 Conference championship.

There's even talk of Iowa changing its uniforms back to resemble a more Pittsburgh Steelers-type look.

Let's hope Ferentz doesn't play the we-lost-big-because-Nebraska-stole-our-playbook card.

Ferentz doesn't have to say anything. People in Nebraska and Iowa have been looking forward to the border war since the two schools last played in 1982.

It finally happens on Sept. 4 in Iowa City, Iowa, which figures to be the highlight of Nebraska's three-game nonconference season.

Iowa

Iowa wasn't going to tip its hand during its annual spring game, in which only 29 points were scored. Ferentz kept things simple by choice.

"I guess we could have done a few things that would have been more enticing, but it probably wouldn't be to our advantage at this point," Ferentz told a gathering of reporters following the game. "As I mentioned, the only advantage we have right now is probably trying to keep other people guessing a little bit."

He has promised to use a West Coast offense, but he wasn't about to unveil all the wrinkles of the system in a meaningless scrimmage.

Nebraska will open the 1999 season against Iowa at Kinnick Stadium in Iowa City (right). One of the Hawkeye leaders is running back Ladell Betts (below), who set a record for rushing yards by a freshman with 679.

Voice of the Hawkeyes/Iowa Sports Information





He'd rather let Nebraska worry about it for the summer.

"There won't be any secrets after that first week," Ferentz said. "Hopefully, we'll have a few things that will work."

Ferentz isn't even ready to name a starting quarterback. He all but promised it would be a three-man competition in the fall between Kyle McCann, Scott Mullen and Randy Reiners. McCann threw for 131 yards and two touchdowns during the spring game, Mullen had decent numbers and Reiners sat out with a knee injury.

"Now it's up to the coaches to sit back and evaluate it," McCann told the Cedar Rapids Gazette. "We all took our shots this spring and did the best we could and we'll see what happens from here."

Again, Ferentz isn't ready to reveal what he's thinking.

"Right now, we have three guys in stiff competition," he said. "Each guy brings something different to the table. I wouldn't want to predict now, and I think we are going to go up to game week in September the same way."

The Hawkeyes' defense is another story. Ferentz said Iowa will play a 4-3 front this year, at least early on, because that's what the coaching staff is comfortable with.

"We're keeping an open mind, but this is a nice starting point," he said.

Linebacker Aaron Kampman is probably the Hawks' marquee player on defense. He'll get a chance to shine in the defensive system.

"Aaron has taken a nice step," Ferentz said.

Iowa's defense will have to get better if the Hawkeyes are to turn around from a woeful 3-8 season a year ago. During its final four games, Iowa gave up 161 points and sent Fry out on a bad note.

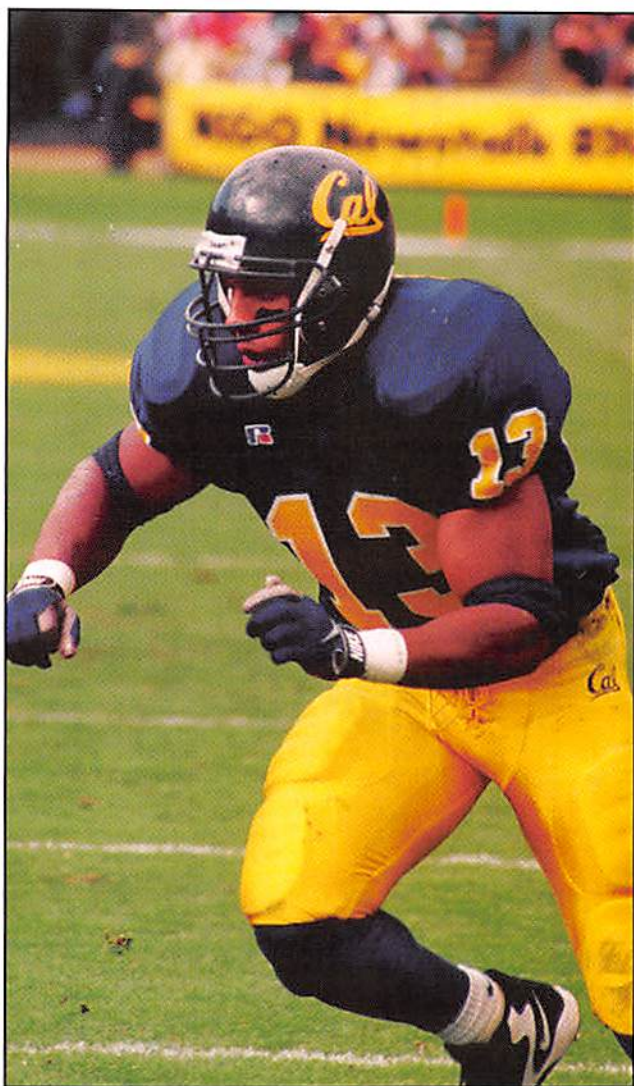
California

Iowa's not the only team on Nebraska's schedule that feels it has something to prove.

California, which Nebraska beat on the road last season, won five games last year and is looking for more in 1999.

Bears Coach Tom Holmoe believes he has the team to do it, too.

"There's no question in my mind that we've improved our team and we'll see better results in the win-loss column," he said. "We were one win away from a bowl berth



Cal Sports Information

Cal linebacker Skou Sanyika led the Pac-10 in tackles for loss, with 23 for 125 yards. He also had seven sacks.

last year with an offense that ranked last in the Pac-10. It doesn't take a genius to see that we can make a big jump if we can make some strides on that side of the football."

Holmoe made some changes in the offense, turning it over to new coordinator Steve Hagen. Also, a new offensive line coach was brought in. Hagen runs a system similar to that of Florida Coach Steve Spurrier, a multiple-set offense that likes to spread the defense out and throw the ball around.

"Our goal is to be a balanced team," Hagen said. "To be successful, you don't want to be in a shootout every week. The best offensive teams are ones that can mix it up and run the ball when they need to. That's what we want to achieve here at Cal."

It won't take much for the Bears to show an improvement. Last year, California averaged only 292.2 yards per game, and ranked last in the Pac-10 Conference in scoring by averaging a dismal 16.6 points per contest.

Will it be enough for the Bears to improve on their 5-6 record remains to be seen.

Seven starters return on offense, including three talent-

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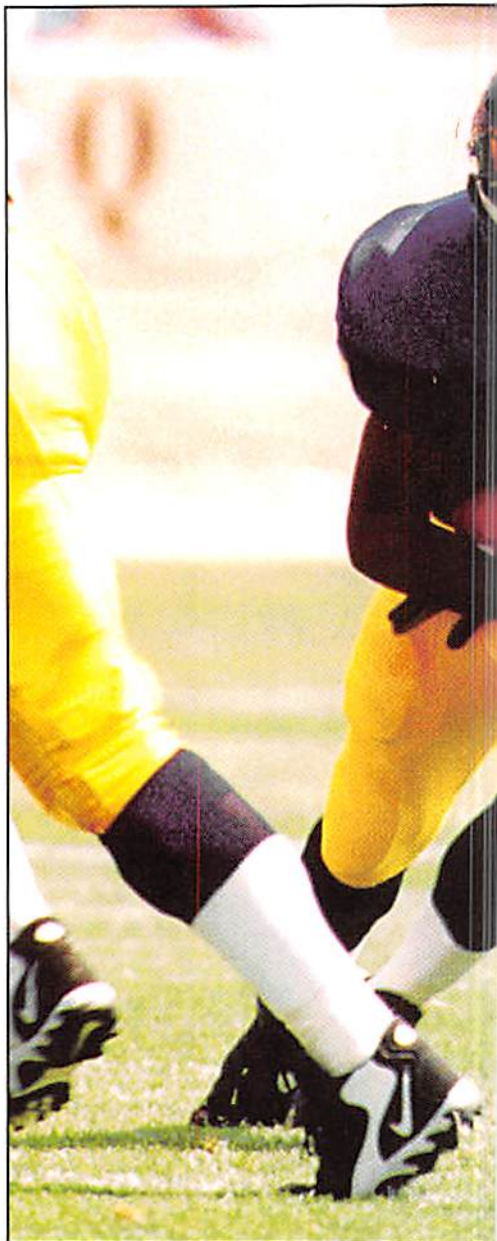
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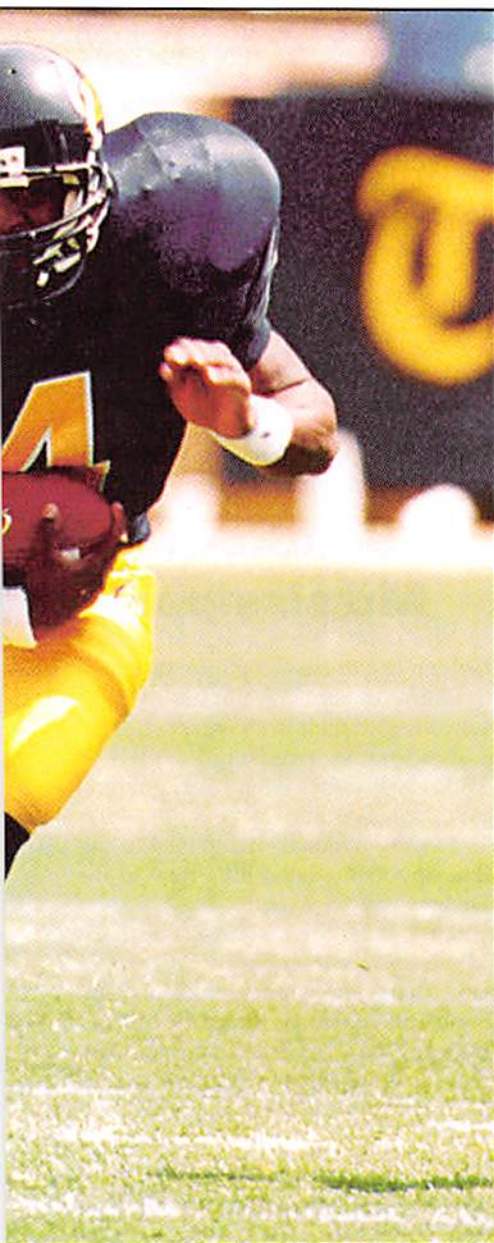


Marcus Fields rushed for 734 yards, sixth best in the Pac-10, as a sophomore and has gained 10 pounds.

ed offensive linemen, but Cal must find a quarterback. Sophomore Samuel Clemons and redshirt freshman David Page battled during the spring for the job, but true freshmen Kyle Boller and Ryan Sorahan will be given a chance to compete for the job when fall camp opens.

The strength of Cal's team will be its defense. The unit last season gave up 340 yards per game and 18 of the squad's top 22 players on defense are back for another run.

Not only are the Bears talented, they're game-tested. Linebackers Skou Sanyika, Matt Beck and safety Pete Destefano will be four-year starters for



Cal Sports Information

the Bears while linemen Andre Carter and Jerry DeLoach have been in the lineup for three seasons.

See the reason for all the excitement in Berkeley?

"With the type of experience and ability we have on defense, we have some high expectations entering the 1999 season," said California defensive coordinator Lyle Setencich.

The secondary will be the key for the Bears' defense. After picking off 14 passes as a group a year ago, this area could determine just how much the team improves.

Cornerback Chidi Iwuoma is one of the team's best cover men, and Deltha O'Neal also returns. The coaching staff also likes the play of two red-shirts in LaShaun Ward and Jameel Powell.



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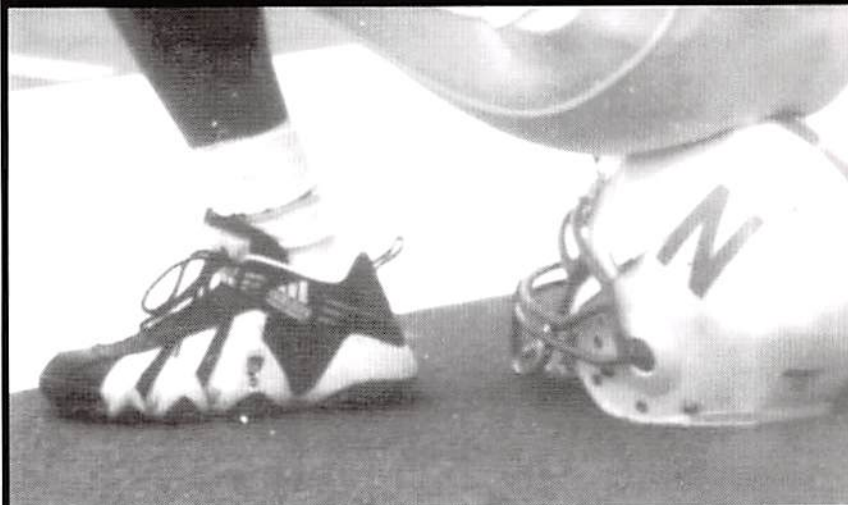
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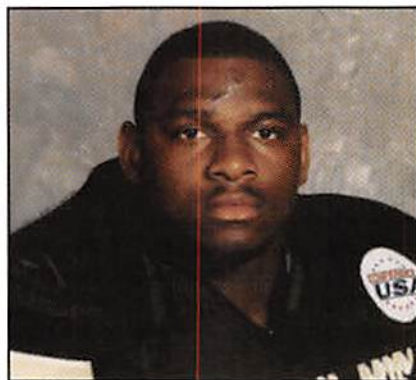
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Defensive end Adalius Thomas was the Conference USA Defensive Player of the Year and a third team All-American.

Southern Mississippi

You won't see a bunch of scared Golden Eagles sneaking into Memorial Stadium on Sept. 18, hoping to leave Lincoln with their pride intact.

No way is a red-clad crowd of 76,000 Nebraska football fans going to intimidate Southern Mississippi.

Playing national championship-caliber opponents is nothing new to the Eagles.

Last year, for instance, Southern Mississippi, a member of Conference USA, had non-league games at Penn State and Alabama, plus a home contest against Texas A&M. Nothing Nebraska will throw at them should be intimidating after those experiences.

Doing it with an inexperienced quarterback leading the offense is another matter.

First up this fall for Southern Mississippi is finding a quarterback to replace Lee Roberts, who threw for 2,680 yards and 24 touchdowns a year ago to lead the Eagles into an appearance in the Humanitarian Bowl.

This spring, sophomores Jeff Kelly, the Eagles' No. 2 quarterback a year ago who only attempted 12 passes, and Brian Balazik along with junior college transfer Cable Davis were fighting for the starting job.

"We have to get people ready to play who can win for this football team," Southern Mississippi Coach Jeff Bower said. "We have to teach them the offense so that they can make plays and play well consistently."

Up next on the Eagles' list of concerns is finding somebody to protect the quarterback. Southern Mississippi needs to find replacements for four graduate starters. Weakside guard



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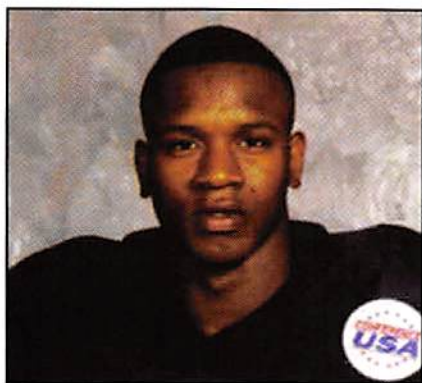
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Senior wide receiver Sherrod Gideon caught 78 passes for 1,303 yards and 15 touchdowns.

Shederick Blackman is the only starter back up front.

However, Bower likes what he sees from the younger guys coming up in the one-back system.

"In all honesty, I think that we are going to be a little more athletic there," Bower said. "Obviously, the experience isn't there. We are going to be young and we are going to be inexperienced at those positions. There are a number of guys that need to step up and establish themselves."

Southern Miss does have somebody to shoulder the load if the offense needs time to gel. H-back Derrick Nix returns for his sophomore season after rushing for 1,180 yards, which was the 19th best season ever from a freshman running back.

Defense should be the strength for the Eagles, especially early in the season. All four down linemen return as do two starting linebackers.

However, the defensive front needs to improve. A year ago, the Eagles gave up more than 160 yards per game on the ground and allowed three opponents to score at least 30 points.

The line is anchored by ends Cedric Scott and Adalius Thomas, who were both first-team all-Conference USA selections last season. Scott had 9.5 sacks and was in on 66 tackles as a sophomore while Thomas, who earned All-American status last year, led the team with 12.5 sacks and 20 tackles for loss.

"This is a group that has talent and the front seven should be the strength of our defense," Bower said. "We want to be better there. Just because guys started last year or previous years does not mean that you are at the top of your game. We want our guys to get better, and I think we are capable of that." ■ — By Mark Derowitsch

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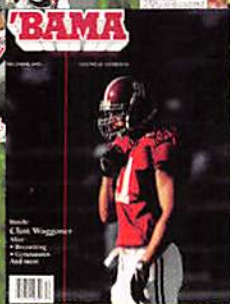
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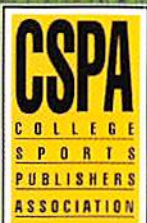
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Bobby Bowden's Florida State Seminoles look to be primed for another run at a national championship. Tennessee defeated Florida State 23-16 in the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl Jan. 4 to win the 1998 title.

UPCOMING BCS SCHEDULE

1999 Regular Season

Jan. 1, 2000 — The Rose Bowl Game presented by AT&T

Jan. 1, 2000 — FedEx Orange Bowl

Jan. 2, 2000 — Tostitos Fiesta Bowl

Jan. 4, 2000 — Nokia Sugar Bowl*

2000 Regular Season

Jan. 1, 2001 — The Rose Bowl Game presented by AT&T

Jan. 1, 2001 — Tostitos Fiesta Bowl

Jan. 2, 2001 — Nokia Sugar Bowl

Jan. 3, 2001 — FedEx Orange Bowl*

2001 Regular Season

Jan. 1, 2002 — Tostitos Fiesta Bowl

Jan. 1, 2002 — Nokia Sugar Bowl

Jan. 2, 2002 — FedEx Orange Bowl

Jan. 3, 2002 — The Rose Bowl Game presented by AT&T*

* Indicates National Championship Game

- 1. Florida State . . . Seminoles make do with defense**
- 2. Penn State . . . schedule will test not-so-young Lions**
- 3. Tennessee . . . defending champ Vols must visit Gainesville**
- 4. Arizona . . . Cats' quarterback tandem in tact**
- 5. Florida . . . Gator defensive losses considerable**
- 6. Ohio State . . . Buckeyes have quarterback quandary**
- 7. Texas A&M . . . 18 Aggie starters return**
- 8. Miami . . . Hurricane warning in Big East**
- 9. Michigan . . . (Drew) Henson could be the man**
- 10. Nebraska . . . Huskers must stay healthy**

TOP 25

- 11. Wisconsin . . . Badgers get a rush from (Ron) Dayne**
- 12. Georgia . . . speed on defense and (Quincy) Carter, too**
- 13. Notre Dame . . . 3-4 defense gives Irish new look**
- 14. Georgia Tech . . . best of the rest in ACC**
- 15. UCLA . . . post-McNown era begins**
- 16. Colorado . . . back to the future with (Gary) Barnett**
- 17. Air Force . . . a wishbone without (Blaine) Morgan**
- 18. Virginia Tech . . . (Frank) Beamer's Hokies no joke**
- 19. Kansas State . . . defense not to be ignored**
- 20. Arkansas . . . enthusiasm is high in Fayetteville**
- 21. Oklahoma State . . . versatile (Tony) Lindsay leads 'Pokes**
- 22. Virginia . . . chances good for nine wins again**
- 23. Tulane . . . Wave good-bye to (Shaun) King**
- 24. Brigham Young . . . passing into a new conference**
- 25. Marshall . . . most talent and depth in the MAC**

Early Decisions

Commitments from two top 100 recruits get Nebraska off to a fast start

By James Hale

Nebraska has always been one of the leaders when it comes to early commitments, and already the Cornhuskers are staking claim to one of the top recruiting classes in the country.

It's rare for most programs to have oral commitments before the summer, but Nebraska recently picked up its second top 100 national recruit, when linebacker Jason Richenberger (6-foot-2, 210 pounds, with 4.53 speed in the 40-yard dash) of Liberty, Mo., said yes to the Huskers' early offer.

"The Nebraska fans are awesome, always giving great support, and I want to play at a college where their football program is the main event in the state," Richenberger said. "In Nebraska, the Cornhusker football program is the No. 1 sports program in the state, and the fans are great at showing their support. They had 25,000 fans at their spring game, and that was incredible.

"I also really like Coach (Charlie) McBride. He was so laid-back, didn't pressure me at all like some of the other college coaches that I have run into. Coach McBride told me to go where I felt the most comfortable, and I just loved his approach. Those are the things that won me over."

Richenberger joins tight end Chris Septak (6-5, 235, 4.6) of Millard (West), Neb., as the first to commit to the Cornhuskers. Richenberger is a three-year starter at outside linebacker and this year will expand his role as a running back and punt returner. Richenberger anchored both the 4x100 and 4x200 relays for Liberty and has run a 10.6 100 meters and a 22.16 200.

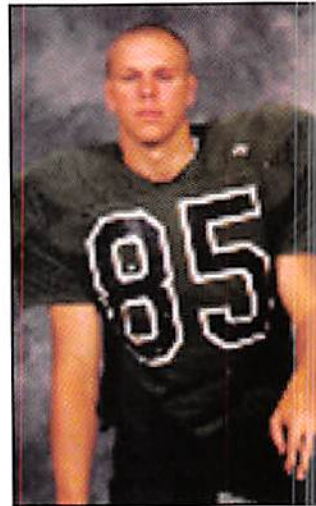
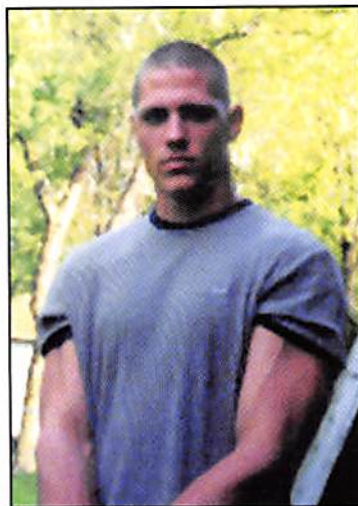
Last year, Richenberger played in only four games due to a mis-diagnosed heart ailment. As it turned out, Richenberger had no trouble with his heart at all and could have played all year. Instead, Richenberger dominated through the four games with 77 tackles and broke a school record for tackles behind the line of scrimmage in a game with eight. He also set a team record with six fumble recoveries and three forced fumbles.

College coaches across the country have just completed their evaluations of high school juniors, and already there are a number of names that are creeping to the top of recruiting boards for every college football program.

You will get a major argument as to who is the top quarterback in the country.

In Louisiana, Brook Berlin (6-2, 195, 4.7) of Shreveport (Evangel) may be the top passer, while Shyrone Carey (5-8, 180, 4.5) of Marrerro (Bishop Shaw) is one of the top option operators in the South. Berlin hit on 226 of 422 passes for 3,312 yards and 38 touchdowns, with only seven interceptions a year ago. He's in the hunt for the all-time prep passing record currently held by J.R. House of Nitro, Va. Going into his senior season, Berlin has passed for 9,683 yards, completing 68.4 percent of his passes with 109 touchdowns.

Carey, running an option attack, rushed for 1,247 yards (6.92 yards per carry and threw for 1,103 yards.



Jason Richenberger (left) and Chris Septak were the first players to commit to Nebraska.

Florida State has already earned the commitment of hot-shot Chris Rix (6-3, 200, 4.6) of LaPuente (Bishop Amat), Calif., who is a three-year starter who threw for 1,500 yards a year ago. John Rattay (6-4, 195, 4.5) of Phoenix (Desert Vista), Ariz., threw for 3,094 yards and 36 touchdowns and is wide-open concerning his recruiting. Zac Wasserman (6-3, 200, 4.8) of Westlake, Calif., has already committed to Penn State. The top QB in Texas is Chance Mock (6-2, 180, 4.7) of The Woodlands.

The top running back may be Luis McGahee (6-0, 213, 4.4) of Miami (Springs), Fla., who has great size, balance and blazing speed. McGahee already has offers from over 20 colleges, including Florida, Florida State, Miami, Penn State, Missouri and Nebraska.

Tyson Thompson (6-1, 185, 4.45) of Irving and Derrick Arnold (6-2, 210, 4.5) of Houston (Milby) are the best ball carriers in Texas. Arnold rushed for 2,300 yards and 31 touchdowns and was named the district MVP. Arturo Beltran (6-0, 200, 4.45) of Abilene is another Lone Star State back who is drawing national attention.

Harold James (6-1, 212, 4.5) of Osceola, Ark., is a combo linebacker/running back who racked up 101 tackles and six interceptions a year ago while rushing for 1,443 yards and 19 touchdowns. James is listing Alabama, Michigan, Arkansas, Mississippi, Illinois, Nebraska, Notre Dame, Florida State, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State.

Davey Henderson (6-1, 185, 4.5) of Opelousas, La., is an awesome talent, rushing for 1,247 yards at 7.65 yards per carry in just six games. Derek Groves (6-2, 200, 4.4) of Tuscaloosa (Holt), Ala., is another from the South to watch.

Walter Reyes (5-11, 200, 4.3) of Yorktown (Struthers), Ohio, ran a 10.6 100 meters and earned second team All-State honors a year ago. Marcus Houston (6-2, 200, 4.4) of Denver (Jefferson) rushed for 1,900 yards and is already

considering Florida State, Michigan, UCLA, Nebraska, Colorado and Texas. In California, Chris Howard (6-1, 180, 4.5) of Wilmington (Banning) is a slasher with great moves in the open field who rushed for 1,635 yards and 21 touchdowns.

Charles Rogers (6-2, 180, 4.4) of Saginaw, Mich., is already being compared to Randy Moss of the Minnesota Vikings at wide receiver. He works out with Jerry Rice of the San Francisco 49ers in the offseason and came up with 800 yards in receiving a year ago and returned two punts for scores. Roy Del Williams (6-2, 175, 4.56) of Reserve (East St. Johns) La., caught 52 passes for 1,006 yards and 10 touchdowns a year ago.

Roy Williams (6-2, 190, 4.45) of Odessa, Texas, may be the best prospect ever to come out of that storied program. A first team All-State selection a year ago, Williams had more than 1,500 yards in pass receptions and managed 18 touchdowns. B.J. Johnson (6-0, 180, 4.45) of South Grand Prairie, Texas, is rated right with Williams after finishing with 900 yards receiving and 20 touchdowns.

Don Patrick (6-5, 195, 4.5) of Hazelton, Pa., was a first-team All-State selection a year ago. Tony Brown (6-3, 180, 4.4) of Fort Lauderdale may be the best in the Sunshine State.

Septak is joined in the tight end group by Eric Knotts (6-4, 235, 4.5) of Detroit (Ford), who may be the fastest tight end in the country.

You will get an argument who is the best offensive lineman in the country. Some say Kwame Harris (6-5, 300, 5.0) of Newark, Del., is No. 1, and others like Mike Munoz (6-6, 295, 5.3) of Cincinnati (Moeller), the son of former NFL lineman Anthony Munoz. Larry Kinnard (6-5, 290, 5.2) of Alliance, Ohio, has already committed to Ohio State. Bobby Meeks (6-4, 250, 5.0) of Aldine (Nimitz), Texas, is a great center prospect, and Lionel Garr (6-6, 330, 5.3) of Diboll is the best offensive tackle prospect in the Texas.

West Simms (6-5, 295, 4.9) of Weatherford, Okla., is also rated among the elite. A four-year starter, Simms recently set the state discus record in Class 3A. OU, Texas and Nebraska are the leaders, with Texas A&M and Oklahoma State also in the picture.

Adam Dorion (6-4, 255, 4.78) of Duncan, Okla., is as good a defensive lineman as there is in the country. He has a brother playing at Kansas State but seems wide open among the Wildcats, OU, Texas, Nebraska and others. Sonny Davis (6-2, 288, 4.9) of

Austin (Lanier), is a top defensive tackle out of Texas. John Paul Jones (6-3, 260, 5.2) of Carencro, La., is already the talk in Bayou country, with 93 tackles, seven sacks, and three fumble recoveries.

Ian Scott (6-3, 285, 4.9) of Gainesville, Fla., made 101 tackles, came up with one interception and had six sacks. Scott was named first-team All-State and likes Stanford, Michigan, Florida State, Florida and Notre Dame.

Jason Witten (6-6, 245, 4.7) of Elizabethton, Tenn., is an outstanding defensive end prospect with a 355-pound bench press and a 460 squat. Witten has Tennessee, Michigan, Virginia Tech and Georgia as his top four. Mac Tyler (6-6, 310, 4.8) of Bessemer (Lanier), Ala., is a standout nose tackle prospect and excels at stopping the run. Vince Wilfork (6-3, 300, 5.0) of Lantana (Santa Luce) Fla., has already committed to Miami.

One of the top players in the country is D.J. Williams (6-2, 225, 4.45) of Concord (DeLaSalle), Calif. This superstar rushed for 809 yards (13.7 yards per carry) as a tailback, scored 13 touchdowns and returned one punt for a score. In addition, he managed 146 tackles on defense.

"D.J. is in a class all by himself," said DeLaSalle Coach Bob Ladouceur. "He is just blessed with all the athletic tools and intelligence it takes to be a great one. He's dominant on both sides of the ball and doesn't have a weakness at this level on the playing field."

Williams is wide open in recruiting but does mention Michigan, Notre Dame, Penn State, Colorado, USC, UCLA, California, Texas and Nebraska.

Another top California linebacker is Tim Warfield (6-4, 245, 4.65) of Vista, who has already committed to UCLA.

Robert Peace (6-3, 235, 4.8) of Rustin, La., has already committed to LSU, but the best linebacker in Louisiana is Tyler Satterwhite (6-2, 225, 4.74) of Shreveport (Evangel), La. Clifton Bowers (6-2, 240, 4.4) of Baltimore (Lake Clifton), Md., and Mike Goolsby (6-4, 225, 4.53) of Joliet (Catholic), Ill., are speed backers that the college powers love.

Most agree that the top defensive back in the country is Lawrence Richardson (5-10, 165, 4.45) of Galveston (Ball), Texas. Harold James (6-0, 215, 4.5) of Osceola, Ark., is also a great running back, while O.J. Owens (6-1, 198, 4.3) of New London (New Standard), N.C., is one of the top pure athletes in the country. ■

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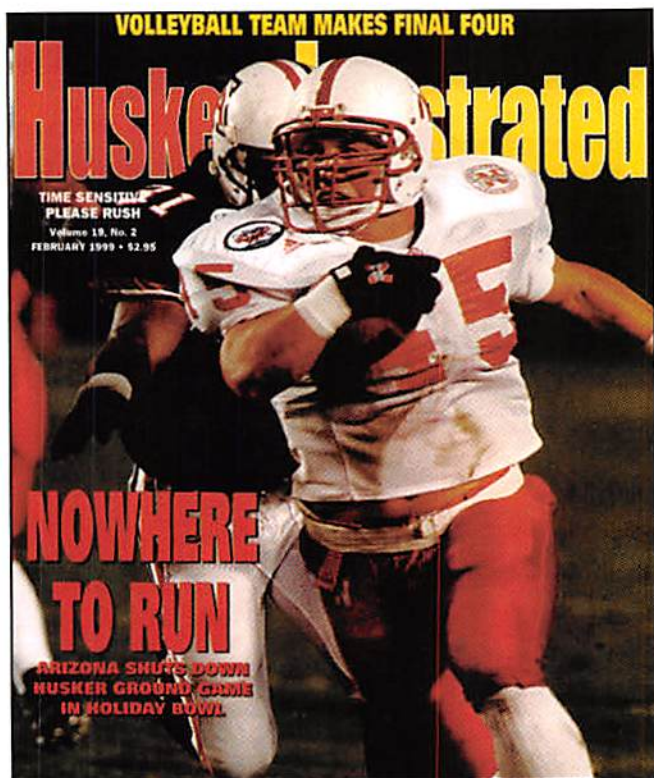
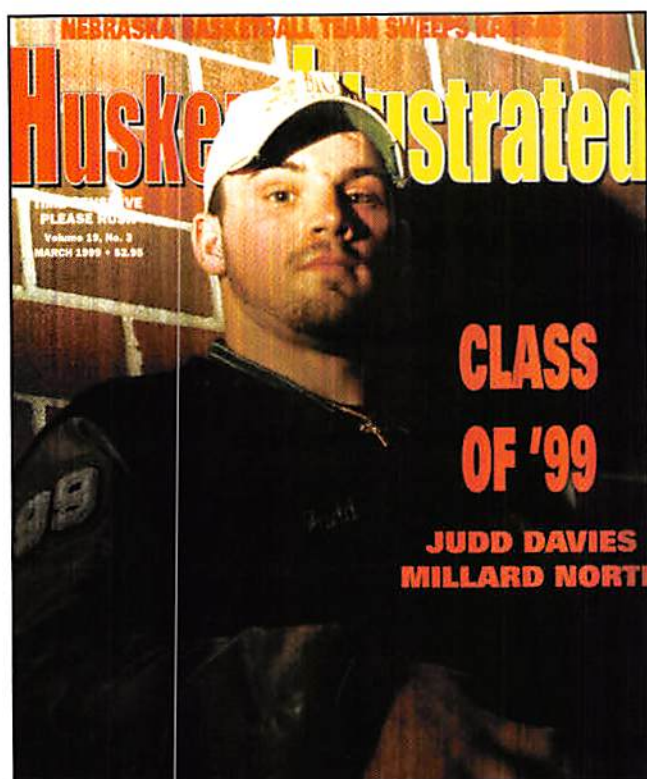
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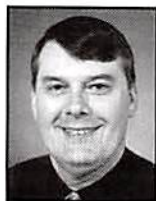
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Mike BABCOCK

FRANK SOLICH WILL SPEND the summer preparing for his second season as Nebraska's head coach. In a curious way, however, this second team might be the first that is truly his.

Then again, it might not be. Perhaps another season must pass before Solich is acknowledged as more than the person to whom Tom Osborne's program has been entrusted.

(The phrase "must pass" isn't meant as a pun, by the way.)

Anyhow, Osborne still casts a giant shadow on a program that was his for a quarter of a century. He helped recruit all of the players who are in it right now. And even though he has gone out of his way not to intrude, maintaining an unnecessarily low profile, some still see the program as his.

A week after the Spring Game, the Omaha World-Herald even asked him to evaluate Solich's first season as coach. Among other things, Osborne described it as "one of the most difficult years I've ever seen Nebraska have in terms of a wide range of injuries to key people."

It wasn't so much an evaluation as an attempt to explain the 9-4 record.

Fans evaluate a team on the basis of its wins and losses. A coach, however, evaluates a team by what it accomplishes in relation to what it is capable of accomplishing, taking into consideration factors that can't be controlled such as injuries, which significantly affected the Cornhuskers in 1998.

A coach also evaluates a team on effort, something Nebraska never lacked last season even though it wasn't in the national championship chase, or the conference playoff for that matter.

"If you're taken out of those things coming down the stretch, it comes back, really, to pride in the program and the pride your players have," Solich said. "And they had that."

"So to me, keeping the attitude and keeping the great work ethic day after day no matter what happens, no matter how many injuries you have, no matter what kind of breaks you get, you've still got to come out and you've still got to play great football. Of course, our staff knew that. Sometimes, you know, your players have a hard time with that, when everything doesn't go well. But that group didn't."

"Chemistry and attitude are what I've learned are as important as anything."

That's his philosophy, applied to his program.

The pressure of succeeding Osborne "bothered me a little more than I felt it would," he said. "I thought I was going to be able to get through the season without feeling any pressure to really get it done at the level everybody was expecting because I have always been the kind . . ."

He paused. "I give my best shot," he said. "This team and

this program were going to get my best shot, and I just felt that was going to be good enough.

"But the Texas A&M game rolled around, and we lost, and the injuries just kept mounting. There was pressure, but yet, I think in athletics you learn to deal with pressure. I've learned that through playing, through coaching, and even though the pressure's there, you can't let it get out of hand."

Osborne has talked about how Bob Devaney, his predecessor, had a built-in grace period when he took charge in 1962, because Cornhusker football had fallen on hard times.

In contrast, he was held to a much higher standard,

replacing Devaney just one season after Nebraska had won back-to-back national championships. Because of the success, even though Devaney didn't interfere or second-guess him, he often felt like a "caretaker," Osborne said.

That feeling persisted well into his tenure as head coach. In fact, the "caretaker" label probably wasn't removed, in his mind at least, until he coached the Cornhuskers to the national title in 1994.

He coached another national championship team the next season, and then for good measure, he went out on top by coaching Nebraska to a third national championship in four seasons.

Solich inherited the unrealistic expectations created by that remarkable run.

If Osborne felt like a "caretaker," how must Solich feel?

"I kind of realized that no matter how it went that some things were going to be critiqued, second-guessed," Solich said. "That's just the way it is. I understood that going in. I don't mind that. I'm able to handle that. And I'm able to deal with that because I know football."

"I know whether we should have been running the ball, whether we should have been throwing the ball, or what we should have been doing in certain situations against certain teams. I know the philosophy we've got here and what we've established is sound. So none of that stuff really bothered me."

Outwardly, maybe, that's true. But it's human nature to be bothered by criticism, however impersonal and whether direct or implied. Six seasons of feeling as if he were a caretaker, and five consecutive losses against Oklahoma, contributed to Osborne's considering an offer from Colorado.

Fortunately for Nebraska, he turned down the offer.

Solich has a long way to go before reaching such a point. He's only been in charge for one season. And he seems to have been able to maintain a proper perspective.

"You're never going to please everybody," he said. "I've known that for a long, long time. And so I didn't try to please everybody. I just tried to please myself."

But some people, especially outside the state, might not even realize he's the coach.

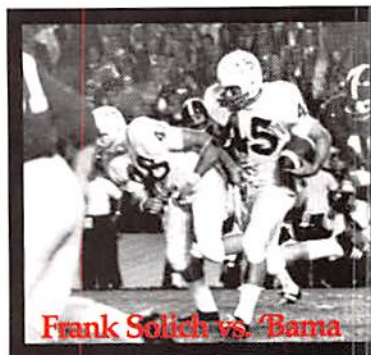
"That's true," he said with a laugh. ■



Frank Solich knows he can't please everyone.



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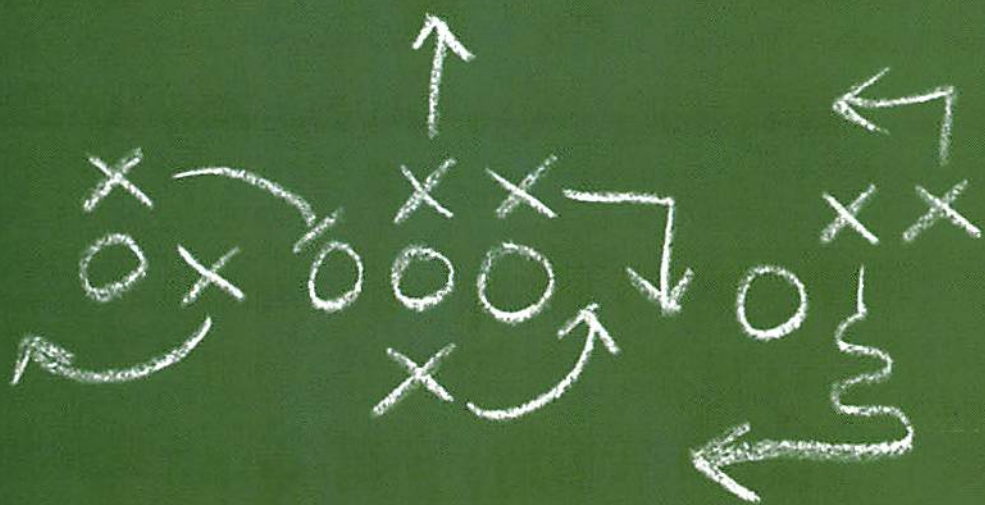
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